# THE MESSAGE OF FROEBEL

## AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

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AND

# OTHER ESSAYS

BY

NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

AUTHOR OF "UNDER THE CACTUS FLAG," "THE KINDERGARTEN IN A NUTSHELL," AND "THE CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE": JOINT-AUTHOR WITH KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN OF "THE REPUBLIC OF CHILDHOOD," "THE STORY HOUR," AND "CHILDREN'S RIGHTS"

"*Kommt lasst uns unsern Kindern leben*"

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# The Message of Froebel.

*"Kommt lasst uns unsern Kindern leben."*

In a late number of the Cornhill Magazine a witty and forcible writer arrays himself in argument against the "message," which he declares to have been "delivered to the world by Froebel, the great apostle of modern theories of education."

This message, which Froebel adopted from Schiller, by the way, is given by the Cornhill writer as "Come let us live *for* our children," and by the change of an insignificant preposition is thus converted into something quite different from its original purpose.

The thought in its ideal and inclusive form has confessedly been taken as the watchword of the kindergarten; it has been painted on banners, embroidered on cardboard, illuminated beneath pictures, wrought in evergreen, set in stained glass, painted on title-pages, used as a text for sermons; but note that the motto as it shines and glows in silk and color and gilding, or looks out upon you from the fair white page runs, "Come let us live *with* our children."

To live for them is something we are all too prone to do, in the sense of desiring to bear their burdens, to save them grief through the imparting of our own experiences; to live with them is another matter, and a far more difficult one, implying on our part, as Dr.

Hailmann says, "Sympathy with childhood, adaptability to children, knowledge and appreciation of child-nature"; but it was this that Froebel advocated, and upon this ideal that the kindergarten is builded.

If we consider the Froebelian message as given in the article mentioned, we see at once that it makes a famous windmill for a modern Don Quixote to tilt against. "Let us live for our children,"—a saying which being interpreted according to Mr. Stephen Gwynn, means educating them so that they may live for their children, a process which would culminate in a world perpetually full of parents sacrificing their lives to make their offspring so moral that they in their turn would repeat the sacrifice. "And so on, *ad infinitum,*" says Mr. Gwynn, though we may assure ourselves that this phrase at least is a mistaken one, for after a few generations of complete self-forgetfulness, self-suppression, and self-effacement all healthy instincts would be so crushed out that there would be nothing to transmit to descendants and the world would come to a sudden stop, like a clock run down.

Fathers and mothers take themselves too seriously nowadays, says our antagonist, and the model Froebelian parent is apt to become a prig and maker of prigs and to acquire "a habit of imparting instruction which makes him intolerable in all societies." This amusing statement, if true, might well give us pause in our mad career of Froebelianism, lest we end in establishing, as did the father of Maria Edgeworth, "an appalling family seminary of all the vir-

tues where nothing escaped the system of education and everything was made subservient to the moral discipline of the house." That the gifted Irishwoman saved her soul alive in such an atmosphere, however, and that her creative faculty and sense of humor were not chilled in the bud by the deadly seriousness and frozen virtue of the household, gives us a ray of hope for ourselves and seems to prove that things were not after all quite so bad with her as they have been painted.

Let us consider some of the varied objections which Mr. Gwynn adduces to the conduct of life according to his version of the message of Froebel. He complains first, as we have noted, that it makes existence a perpetual sorry-go-round of self-sacrifice, and, second, another point already stated, that it develops prigs and prig-makers. A third criticism advanced, is against the folly of attempting to bring unconscious moral influence to bear upon the child according to the suggestions of the great German educator. The result of this mistaken procedure would be, as the critic ingenuously intimates, that the child would early find out the all-too-virtuous intentions of his progenitors and would either knowingly submit to them and thus diminish his own individuality, or rebel openly and altogether against the directing force.

In the one case we foresee, to give our enemy's theory logical development, that the small sufferer would become the Little Arthur of the Sunday school books,—the kind of child that sends all his pocket

money to the heathen; and in the other, that he would become an infant Ishmael, saying, with his red right hand raised against every man, "I will not be good and no one shall make me!"

Another diverting objection alleged to living for our children is that we shall thus be "sending them out into life equipped with a terribly undue sense of their own importance": and still another, and this directed especially against the kindergarten, that "it does not enforce the lesson of personal effort and that in laying itself out to make things pleasant for the learner it does not make sufficient demand upon attention, nor call for exercise of will."

It is quite true, as a New England woman said of a loquacious neighbor, that "you can't talk all day 'thout sayin' somethin' once in a while," and there are several things in this undeniably interesting article that have a keen edge of truth and others that at least require consideration.

The arguments for the most part are scarcely of a kind that can be answered, for they spring from a misunderstanding of this so-called message of Froebel. It does not call upon us for complete self-sacrifice for our children's sake, and, if it did do so, our own healthy instincts could certainly be trusted to keep us from a morbid desire to live altogether for others, while we trust that our native modesty would prevent most of us from acquiring the fatal habit deplored by the Cornhill writer, of imparting instruction in all societies.

As to the matter of unconscious influence, no disciple of Froebel but would agree with Mr. Gwynn that parents who constantly shaped their conduct and conversation for the particular end of the child's moral advantage would be, as Dogberry said, "most tolerable and not to be endured." The silent spiritual influence of which Froebel speaks, and upon which all other great religious teachers are eloquent, can never be directly applied; it is unconsciously given, unconsciously received; it is a breath from depths of being far below the surface waters of self-knowledge, and we cannot prophesy whence it cometh nor whither it goeth.

It is both true and wise to say that character and health are often best promoted by judicious letting alone, though we votaries of the kindergarten had thought in our blindness that we, of all people, least needed to be adjured to ask a little less of education and trust a little more to nature.

The truth is that if our clever adversary thoroughly understood the message of Froebel he would probably be in hearty sympathy with it. He has doubtless been talking over the kindergarten with youthful sentimentalists, with fanatics who claim impossibilities for the Froebelian theories, with foggy-brained enthusiasts who have mastered the letter of the law but have never understood its spirit.—and if England has produced as many of these three classes of persons as the fertile soil of America has grown, his opportunities for conversation have been extended, if not valuable.

We believe, for our part, simply and seriously, and we think sensibly, that this message of Froebel is a divinely-inspired message and that it is one of the texts of a new gospel which will regenerate humanity through education. We believe that the insight into baby life, into infantile needs, desires and aspirations which living with them imparts, gave to Froebel, and has since given to those of his followers who have adopted his methods of study, a peculiar power in dealing with children.

We think that the often-quoted tenement-house mother of Chicago had for a moment the vision of a seer and almost the diction of one, when she said one day to her boy's teacher, "I know why Dinny's allers so good with you—the kindergarten jist matches him with his work."

It is to this, we think, incontrovertible fact that it does match the child, that it provides him with environment as suitable for his needs as water to the fish or air to the bird, that it develops him so thoroughly and so harmoniously, and to the further fact that it matches child-nature in general is due the marked influence that it has already exerted upon later education.

Even those who find much to criticise in its methods are bounteous in praise of the spirit of the work and of the marvelous way in which that spirit has begun to permeate all education, to stir beneath dry places and to wake new thoughts into life.

To begin with small things and proceed to those

which are more important, from its peculiar methods of "playing with brightness" has come all the color-work now so admirably handled in the primary schools.

Drawing also, modeling in clay, nature study, though all these were used to some extent before the advent of the kindergarten, have yet received from it so great an impetus and been directed thereby into channels so novel that they may almost be said to-day to be new branches of instruction.

Country excursions and the planting of school-gardens,—direct outgrowths of kindergarten practice; vacation-schools and public playgrounds, fruit of Froebel's conviction that happy and purposeful activity is essential to childhood,—these testify in all our great cities to the strength and value of this so-called "mud-pie theory of education."

Uno Cygnæus, the deviser of the Slojd system, confesses that to Froebel he owes the seed-thought of his work, the paidologists call him the father of child-study, and the advocates of manual training go so far as to state that the kindergarten is the most perfect "all-round" school of industry in the world.

When we reflect, moreover, upon the great number of kindergarten normal classes established in the last twenty years, upon the companies of enthusiastic, devoted young girls who annually graduate from them, upon the mothers' meetings carried on by the directors of all free kindergartens, upon the coteries of educated women who are studying Froebelian theories on a more

advanced plane, and upon the parents' associations, affiliated with these, in which fathers are studying children's ways, we begin to have an idea of the power of the movement as a whole, and of the value of Froebel's message: "Come let us live with our children."

Nor are we willing to agree with Mr. Stephen Gwynn, whose opinions, already so often quoted, are decidedly stimulating to warfare, that the adoption of these theories has an ironical result, that the modern mother is so profoundly convinced that this business of education is a difficult and a subtle one that she packs her children out of the house as soon as they can walk and salves her conscience by paying the bills. It may indeed be that the modern mother has "learned that the early training of a human creature should be intrusted to a person who has minutely studied the mental processes of children and understood the harmoniously proportionate development of body and mind," but the committing to memory of this stilted phraseology could hardly lessen her own sense of responsibility, nor avert from her mind the conviction that the truth is as applicable to her as to the teacher.

No, while the message of Froebel, as exemplified in the kindergarten, is considered, by some of the highest authorities in these matters, as the greatest educational force of the age, it behooves all persons intrusted with the care of children to gain some knowledge of its basic principles and of the methods which it uses to carry them out. Let it be remembered at the out-

set, to give a wide outlook upon the matter, that it is a system of child training which has nothing to do with class, race, condition or country. It has too often been considered as a charity and not sufficiently valued as a means of education, and there has been great lack of appreciation of the fact that, as somebody has wisely said, while it is a desirable privilege for the children of the poor, it is a vital necessity for the children of the rich.

Let it be remembered too, in spite of all criticism, that so much as the child-garden has done as an influence in shaping later education, in modifying the work of school, seminary, college and university, so much it may do for the baby in every nursery, for Froebel's view of child culture was that it should begin at birth, in the sub-conscious period of existence.

He considers the infant in the cradle and provides numerous plays by which his dawning intelligence may be addressed, though this training is to be of a following kind and is never to interfere with Nature's processes and her slow and gradual unfolding.

Even should the mother never make use of one of the kindergarten technicalities, she would, by studying the writings of Froebel, gain a reverence for the personality of the child and an insight into the threefold relations of her little one to man, to nature, and to God, which would not only make her a better mother, but a better, truer woman.

## THE SPIRIT OF REVERENCE.

"Man does not willingly submit himself to reverence; or rather, he never so submits himself: it is a higher sense, which must be communicated to his nature; which only, in some peculiarly favored individuals, unfolds itself spontaneously, who on this account, too, have of old been looked upon as saints and gods. Here lies the worth, here lies the business of all true religions."

—*Goethe.*

If there be any basis of truth in the popular sentiment which affixes labels to the various nations of the earth, stamping one as light and frivolous, another as slow of understanding and stiff-necked, another still as treacherous and vindictive, then do we Americans stand accused at the world's bar, of the high crime of irreverence. How well founded is the accusation each one of us may judge for himself, though we may maintain with much show of reason that our national fault, if indeed it be ours, is of the lips and not of the heart and is merely a light and jesting way of looking at things produced and fostered by the youth and gayety and prosperity of our country.

We are young and strong, free and rich,—it is more than a generation since any widespread national calamity befell us, what wonder then if we look at the world through rose-colored spectacles and see each other's faces broad with smiles as in a convex mirror?

May not this so-called irreverence, too, be in some

sense a matter of climate? In the posthumous diary, lately published, of a gifted American girl, she says with keen insight, "How wonderful it is that we should have all the sunshine in our land! No wonder that we are cheerful, and that we are always half in jest. God said we might be."

We may consider perhaps that we have divine warrant for an optimistic, joyous spirit, for lightness of heart and some consequent lightness of speech, but we must beware lest this lead us too far. If we are in truth irreverent as a people, irreverent of heart and in the real sense of the word, then we are lacking in the one thing upon which, in the opinion of the world's greatest philosophers, "all depends for making man in every point a man."

Goethe, in "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels," leads his hero to the "Pedagogic Province" where his son is to be educated, and hardly has he crossed the borders of that fair land when he is struck with the three different attitudes and expressions assumed by the companies of children he meets as their leaders and teachers pass by. The youngest cross their hands upon their breasts and look joyfully toward heaven; the next in age fold their arms behind their backs and turn upon the earth a smiling look, while the oldest, with frank and spiritual air, their hands by their sides, turn their heads toward their comrades and form themselves into a line,—the younger children, be it understood, always standing separate.

These three kinds of gesture are interpreted to

Wilhelm as symbolic of the three reverences which it is the object of education to foster. The first is reverence to a God above who images and reveals himself in parents, teachers, and superiors; the second is reverence for the earth and all that lives upon it, for its bounty, its laws, and the joys and sorrows that it gives us.

When the lessons indicated by the first two postures have been mastered the pupil is freed from them and assuming the third attitude learns reverence to man. Turning to his fellows, he ranges himself with them and stands ready to give and take, to love and admire, to help and be helped and in combination with his equals to face the world.

From these reverences, says Goethe, springs the highest reverence,—reverence for one's self,—and the severest punishment ever inflicted upon pupils in the "Pedagogic Province" is to be declared unworthy to show forth any phase of the virtue which all influences are conspiring to teach.

It is Goethe's opinion that well-formed healthy human beings bring much into the world with them, but that no child brings reverence. It is a higher sense, he says, which must be communicated, and in the communication lies the business not only of education but of all true religions.

If it is the general agreement that American children, and consequently adults, are peculiarly lacking in this virtue, then we must cast about for methods by which it may be imparted, for the soul without it

is but a parched country lacking the gentle dew, which, nightly falling, refreshes every tender bud of goodness.

Taking up the first reverence, may we not question whether the religious education of our little ones is all that it might be. Is their Sunday school really a place of spiritual influences where some simple lesson is learned, some delicate impression made each week? Is the "grace before meat" they daily hear, a clearly-repeated, heartfelt invocation varied occasionally to suit varying circumstances and looked for and remembered because so varied? Are the family prayers, whether of daily or weekly occurrence, so planned as to interest even the youngest auditors? Do we speak of religious things with respect in the children's presence, or are we, to quote Goethe again, "indifferent towards God, contemptuous towards the world, spiteful towards equals"?

Is church-going a matter of importance, of real meaning with us, an occasion looked forward to so gladly that the child counts it a high festival when he also is occasionally allowed to attend the services? It is true that he may understand very few of the songs that are sung and perhaps none of the words that are spoken, but these matters will by no means affect his deep impression of the reverent spirit breathed through the sacred place, of the common aspiration that binds together the many hearts that beat about him.

And lastly, is the child's own prayer at night faith-

fully heard and with reverent leisure? The rhymed or metrical petitions which we teach our children are commonly poor things enough and could we not trust the Lord to know what we mean to impart by them, as well as to spread his influence above and through and beyond ours, our charges would often gain little by their infantile devotions.

The nightly blessing, when the little one is tucked away in bed, is something seldom heard perhaps and yet there is no simple ceremony more devout and more impressive. There is a child of yesterday who well remembers the touch of a cool, soft hand upon her forehead every evening in the dusk and a gentle voice that said as she was wafted into dreamland, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace." A child so blessed sleeps consciously under the shadow of the everlasting wings and the soul thus early is drawn into communion with the highest.

As to the second reverence, that gained by communion with Nature and comprehension of her varied language, we frequently entirely fail to appreciate its importance or to provide means by which it may be learned. Froebel, whose eyes the Lord had touched that he might see into the heart of the child, tells us that the restless baby may often be quieted at night if he is taken to the window and allowed to look out upon the tranquil moon as she sails serenely through the blue, and the great teacher writes a song to illustrate

the fact, showing us how we may "make the moon's attraction a point of departure for the development of that spiritual attraction of which it is but the vanishing symbol."

It is not only the moon and the sun and the stars and all celestial phenomena that naturally lead the child to contemplation and wonder, but the life of plants and of animals, the wonderful crystals of the rocks, the exquisite convolutions of the shells, the delicate fronds of the sea-moss, the deep golden heart of the flowers,—he is so made that instinctively he loves and admires all these and he cannot look upon them and study them without an irresistible movement of his soul toward their Maker and his own. Nature study is as essentially religious as the instruction which we are accustomed to think of under that head, and in many cases perhaps it is even more truly so, for we cannot interfere with it so much, we cannot dim the bright page so sadly by the overhanging shadow of our own personality. The Great Artificer and that which He has made teach the lesson together and we have but to provide the right atmosphere for the lesson.

And what may we do to teach the third reverence? In the first place let us supply the child with definite ideals which he may admire. Hero-worship is but another name for reverence, and the tides of the soul ever need a moon to draw them upward to the flood. In history, ancient and modern, in romance and ballad and legend, we have unlimited treasures at our com-

mand and if the story-teller's art be ours we need no other magic to create wonder and reverence in the youthful heart. Not only must we search the stores of the past, but, lest the child think the giants are all dead, let us hold up to his admiration the men and women of to-day in his own village and township and state and country, those who are now and here living noble lives and doing noble deeds. Let us strive, too, never to destroy youthful enthusiasms, if reasonably well-founded, by unduly sharp criticism given from the standpoint of the adult. Reverence is a virtue which, like any other, grows by exercise, and the ideal toward which first it climbs must needs be nearer the earth than the point to which it last aspires.

Let us too, as parents and guardians, strive ever to maintain a just and firm government in our various domains, lest the child, seeing how easily our rule is set at naught, learn to scorn those who are set in authority over him and from despising earthly laws and law-givers begin to scoff at those which are heavenly.

And what is the conclusion of the whole matter? It is that the pure flame of reverence must glow in our own spirits before we can hope to light it on another's altars. Our pessimism, our bitterness, our hopelessness, our contempt and carelessness for those things which are high and holy will breathe out like noxious vapors, do what we may to suppress them, and will suffocate the first feeble flames of reverence as they kindle in the soul of the child.

# TRAINING THE IMAGINATION.

"——For, see, he soared
By means of that mere snatch to many a hoard
Of fancies; as some falling cone bears soft
The eye, along the fir-tree spire, aloft
To a dove's nest."

—*Robert Browning.*

The question whether education should devote itself to cultivating faculties already strong, or to waking those which lie dormant, in order to develop the mind upon all sides, is one about which there is wide difference of opinion, and concerning which many fierce battles of argument have been fought. If the child is "born short" in any line, say the warriors of the one party, no amount of training can supply what Dame Nature has withheld: why not, therefore, expend your energies in cultivating the powers which have been given in fullest measure?

Such an adage as *Poeta nascitur, non fit,* has a broad reach, it must be confessed; and many of us, after a despairing day in the schoolroom, spent in hammering at the door of an absent faculty, are ready to take it as a life motto, and to protest that the cultivation of natural aptitudes is the only fit task of the educator.

But here comes the party of the other part, which has been breathlessly waiting its chance to argue, and declares that harmonious development should be the

object of ideal education, and that every faculty of the child must be so dealt with that it may have an opportunity of growth, should the life-germ prove to lie within it. This seems a sensible argument also, and we can but wonder where, between such opposite views, the real truth may be said to lie.

It seems to be clear, however, that, though specialists are the order of the day, and though we incline more and more every year to the opinion that the full development of individuality is the goal to be reached in education, yet an infant specialist is an abnormal creature, and the object of early training, at least, should be to make an "all-round child."

These varied thoughts were suggested by the remark of a small boy which was published among child-sayings the other day. "Mother," said the infant skeptic in the midst of a fairy story, "I really don't want to hear any more of that stuff; I don't believe a word of it."

It is difficult to decide just what remedies to apply in such a case as this, unless we know something of the attendant symptoms, or can learn enough of the patient to discover the probable cause of the malady. It may, indeed, be no malady at all, but an inherited defect, like deafness or dipsomania; but certainly some attempt should be made to cure it, should it threaten to become permanent. There is a possibility, of course, that it may be only a phase of development, for Sully points out in his "Studies of Childhood" that most children are at once matter-of-fact observers

and dreamers, passing from the one to the other as the mood takes them; and that the prodigal output of fancy, the reveling in myth and story, is often characteristic of one period of childhood only.

"The wee mite of three and a half," he says, "spending more than half his days in trying to realize all manner of pretty, odd, startling fancies about animals, fairies, and the rest, is something vastly unlike the boy of six or seven, whose mind is now bent on understanding the make and go of machines, and of that big machine, the world."

Should the skepticism of our small child then, be only a passing mood, we can look upon it with comparative indifference, assuring ourselves that human growth is not always and uniformly lovely at every stage. Assuming, for the moment, that the trouble we are considering is only skin-deep, we may find various reasons for it without much difficulty.

Who knows but that the boy may have been repeating in a parrot-like way some remark he had heard made on a different topic, fully cognizant, as children often are, that it would serve to adorn him, for a time, with a peacock tail of notoriety?

Who knows but that the mother may have been reading him one of the clumsy modern fairy tales, finally shown by the author to have been only a sham, or the product of mince pie, from which the child's fancy rightly revolted as from a sin against the spirit?

There is a chance, however, that the matter may be a much more serious one, and in that case we must

ask ourselves what is to be done for the mending of it.

If any one sweeping assertion in regard to children is more often made than another, it is, perhaps, that they are full of fancy; and yet there is plenty of evidence that nature makes now and then a decidedly matter-of-fact and unimaginative specimen, as if to vary the pattern. Let not the parents of our little infidel, then, despairingly persuade themselves that theirs is a difficulty never encountered before, for every one who has seen much of children knows that such a white blackbird is now and then to be found among them. Nor let them, on the other hand, pride themselves on the unusual quality of the mind of their offspring, believing that it will develop into good hard common sense by and by. Such mental bent as it does indicate will, on the contrary, if not modified by education, be the greatest of misfortunes, for he who is absolutely destitute of imagination can have no charity, no sympathy, no creative ability, no ideality, no reverence, and no true love.

Yet we need not conclude that because the child does not care for myths and fairy tales he is therefore utterly lacking in imagination. Mr. Ruskin has told us in "Præterita" that, when a boy, he was incapable of acting a part or telling a tale, and that he never knew a child "whose thirst for visible fact was at once so eager and so methodic." The imagination was there in this case in superabundant measure, but was not yet in working order, for the whole mind was

absorbed in other things, and doubtless more than all else in the study of Nature and her manifestations.

The imagination, too, may early be directed to science, and the child show inexhaustible interest in machines and their working, in rocks or stars or flowers or animals or atmospheric forces. Such a child would obviously be a bright and thoughtful one, and would give such clear indications of his natural bent as to make his future equally clear.

But is there a little one who shows no keen interest in any of these things, and who does not care for tales of fancy, it will probably also be noted that his powers in play are somewhat below the average, and that he does not invent for himself any of those charming nursery dramas in which the youthful actor is sometimes so absorbed as apparently to lose his own identity. Must we therefore conclude that he is a dullard? It may be so, or it may be that he is merely undeveloped. If the former hypothesis seem correct, let us delay to write him down an ass until we assure ourselves that his physical condition is normal. We can hardly expect a child who cannot hear the tick of a watch a foot from his ear to be prompt in response to verbal suggestion: we can hope for little mental brilliancy from a small creature so afflicted with adenoid growths, for instance, that the act of breathing takes all his strength: and the faculty of imagination, which depends for its power on rapid, frequent, and clear perceptions, cannot be supposed to have a fighting chance to live in a small being

whose eyesight has never permitted him to see things as they are. All these millstones not only may hang about the neck of a so-called dull child, but have hung there in numbers of well-known cases, and yet no one has seen them till their weight had utterly distorted the growing intelligence.

But, say the subject of our discussion is in good physical condition and yet is heavy and stolid and devoid of fancy, what then shall we do? If we think of imagination in its supremest meaning, as the creative faculty of the poet or the artist, it passes, so says Alexander Bain, "entirely out of the reach of express training, and is excluded from schemes of education as too high for the school."

Yet if, as already said, it is dependent upon knowledge received from the outward world through the perceptions, and is a rearranging or creative power, there are many ways in which it may be developed.

Perhaps, though the child has been looking all his life, he has never really seen anything for want of some one who could direct his vision; perhaps the one thing of all others which would really wake him up has not yet come within his ken; perhaps, being naturally slow of perception, he has never met anyone who could vivify for him the objects of the outside world, interpreting the thing seen to the dormant intelligence.

All these hindrances to the growth of fancy may be removed by dint of effort, and we may at least supply the child in babyhood with something which

will interest him, with playthings which he can rearrange and combine according to his will, with objects which give him genuine delight, and thus, by force of occupying himself with what is small and near at hand and concrete, he may by and by gain the power of reaching out to that which is beyond.

If he has no love of fairy stories, time is worse than wasted in reading or telling them to him. Why not substitute the wonder tales of science, whose truth can be demonstrated to any little doubting Thomas? "After all," as Lowell said, "there is as much poetry in the iron horses that eat fire as in those of Diomed that fed on men. If you cut an apple across, you may trace in it the lines of the blossom that the bee hummed around in May; and so the soul of poetry survives in things prosaic."

Some kind of literature the young human creature must have; and if it be neither myth, fairy lore, nor science stories, we may try hero tales when he is older, and read him sounding ballads that must stir the blood of any young thing that loves by nature, strife and pursuit and conquest, the ring of steel, the clash of armor, and the shouts of battle.

Dickens has etched for us in "Hard Times" a picture of child-training which deliberately excludes all appeals to the imagination; and we know the fate of that unfortunate little Gradgrind who was so often bidden never to wonder. Even a McChoakumchild, we might suppose, should know that wonder is an essential element in human development, that it

stretches the mind and sets all the faculties on tiptoe striving to catch the bright visions that float just out of reach. Let us reverse the Gradgrind motto for our children, and insist that they cultivate the imaginative powers, for it was a great lover of their kind who said that childish wonder was the first step in human wisdom.

# THE UNSOCIAL CHILD.

"And so there is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but it is capable of a unity of some kind with other creatures, and in that unity is its perfection and theirs, and a pleasure also for the beholding of all other creatures that can behold."

—*John Ruskin.*

SINCE the majority of children conform with more or less exactness to a certain standard, it would appear unprofitable, perhaps, to devote much time to a consideration of the exceptions; and yet, to a mother who has an ugly duckling in her own family, he seems of far more importance than the whole flock of her neighbor's swans.

One might be tempted, if one were asked by such a parent how to train the social instincts of the young, for instance, to reply hastily that the question was an automatic, self-answering one, for that children bring children is a proverb known in every land. And yet the exception has as much right to be considered as the normal case; and now and then in families of every grade of society we find a little one who seems to prefer his own society to that of others. He cares to mingle, apparently, neither with his brothers and sisters, nor with visitors, and it is often a difficult matter to discover the cause of this peculiarity and find its remedy, if indeed we see fit to apply one.

It must be conceded to be a peculiarity, of course, and the child that shows it is exceptional in one way or another; for by nature life seeks life, and youth yearns after youth. It is only necessary to notice the riotous behavior of a puppy when he has another of his kind to roll and tumble about with, or to watch twin lambs sporting in a meadow, and contrast these things with their demeanor when alone, to know that companionship is needful and delightful to all young creatures.

For what reasons, then, would a child voluntarily withdraw himself from his fellows and prefer to occupy himself alone?

In the first place, there might be a very simple and obvious cause which would make the separation not his fault but his misfortune—that of ill health. A child may be neither a cripple nor an invalid and yet be so far below par in strength and energy that the society of ruddy, boisterous, reckless, romping urchins of his own age may be a positive weariness to him. He is not to blame for this; indeed, older people can well sympathize with him and can remember certain times when the aggressive strength and spirits of lively, untiring, effervescent, high-keyed friends have been evils not to be borne.

If the little one is in good health and yet is solitary in his habits, it may be that he is too advanced in mind to care for the companionship of children of his own age, just as a grown cat looks down with dignified scorn upon the trivial gambols of a kitten. Perhaps he

would get on extremely well with older playmates and a more elaborate system of games, while he finds those offered to him by circumstances not in the least worth while.

It may be, too, that he is of a thoughtful, fanciful temperament and is absorbed in the society of dream-companions tenfold more real to him than the people of the outside world. In many cases a solitary child, or one who is exceptionally imaginative, evolves for himself an "invisible playmate" who becomes as dear as a real one, to whom he gives a name, who shares all his sports and nestles by his side at night. Sometimes such a figure of fantasy, never more than half believed in and yet the dearer for the doubt, persists in the mind for years, serving all purposes of companionship to the little dreamer.

Now and then, too, an exceptionally bright child, active of mind, quick of perception, fertile in expedients, is surrounded by unkind fate with little dullards who can neither originate anything themselves nor carry out properly the details of a game intrusted to them. The fiery spirit endures their company as long as it well can and then breaks impatiently away, preferring solitude to the crushing weight of such stupidity. There are plenty of stolid, unimaginative children who, having no adequate views about play as a really important and engrossing business, are quite willing to go through the same stereotyped games day after day, and their society is doubtless quite as tire-

some to a bright child as that of a grown-up bore may be to us.

Sometimes, again, a baby comes into the world with the birthmark of genius on his brow, and is constrained by the very conditions of his nature to go through the world to some extent a solitary. Sully says, in his "Studies of Childhood," speaking of the unusual and original child, "It will possibly be found that, although not a romping, riotous player, nor, indeed, much disposed to join other children in their pastimes, the original child has his own distinctive style of play, which marks him out as having more than other children of that impulse to dream of far-off things, and to bring them near in the illusion of outer semblance, which enters more or less distinctly into all art."

If you have never seen one of these strange, gifted children, you may find a touching sketch of one in "Missy," the heroine of Charlotte Brontë's "Villette," and another, done from life by George Sand of herself, in her "Histoire d'une Vie."

With the thoughts and dreams and fancies, the wonderful solitary plays, of such a gifted human creature, who would presume to meddle? Who would force the society of a rosy little earthly mortal on one whose spirit-wings have already budded?

If the want of sociability in our ugly duckling is due to any of the foregoing causes, we have no reason to be anxious, but may rather joyfully look forward to the snowy whiteness of plumage the swan will put

on by and by; but, unfortunately, there is another side to the picture, and ugly ducklings have been known before now to grow up into still uglier ducks and drakes.

The unsocial child may be a selfish and a miserly one, who cannot endure that any hands but his own shall touch his cherished toys, and would rather doom himself to complete isolation than have his treasures meddled with.

He may also be a youthful tyrant, and betake himself to sulk in a corner if he cannot order every detail of the game. Unless he chances upon very gentle and timid companions, he must of necessity be unsocial, for, no matter how much he wants to play, he can find few who are willing to play with him.

There is still another unsocial child sometimes (and we must touch very tenderly upon his peculiarities), who, from either physical or mental defect, is not quite as other children; and, worse than this (or is it better—who can say?), he realizes the fact. He knows that he does not hear as soon, does not understand as quickly, cannot carry out ideas as rapidly, as the rest; he is always stumbling along heavy-footed after them, not quite able to "catch up," and is often the butt of their thoughtless gibes. Who can wonder if by and by he steals away from his playmates now and then, or at last isolates himself entirely, shut in with the self that is so sore a burden.

Yet such an unfortunate, and all the other little erring mortals we have touched upon, are in most

dire need of the society they seem anxious to reject. The dreamy, fanciful child would be the better now and then for the company of a good, prosaic, ordinary little mortal, such as he will meet and perhaps be housed with all along life's journey; the exceptionally bright child needs to come in contact with those equally gifted, and even more gifted than he, that he may more justly estimate his own qualities; the selfish child must learn through love to give up to others; the tyrant must find out early in life that he cannot always rule, and that disaster will come if he attempts to do so; and the small sufferer who is not quite normal will make wonderful improvement if he can mingle with companions of his own age who will be kind and gentle and considerate and allow him to forget his defects now and then.

A child who is determinately unsocial can sometimes be led to break the outer shell at least of his reserve and shyness—for the trouble sometimes lies in these defects also—through the company of pet animals. If he is given whatever living things his heart most longs for, whether rabbits or pigeons or guinea-pigs or white mice or kittens or canaries or puppies; if they are understood to be his own and he is taught what they need in the way of care and food and shelter; if he is made entirely responsible for their welfare, the new duties and interests will often take him quite out of himself. He will be busy, happy, and absorbed; he will learn to forget himself somewhat in the needs of others, and that is the first

essential of living; and he will have no time to think of the immense ME who has blocked the way to his knowing his companions. He will meet another child in community of distress over the ailments of a pet rat, when he would be consumed with shyness if there were no subject of mutual interest, and thus he learns unconsciously how to get on with his fellows.

Akin to this resource which may be given to an unsocial child is the persuading him to take up some interesting and suitable occupation. If he be of a scientific turn, cultivate his taste for collecting plants or stones or shells; if he has a mechanical bias, give him a turning-lathe or a printing-press; if he is artistic, let him study wood-carving, drawing, or clay modeling: it does not matter which one of these things he takes up, so long as it interests him; but let him do something which will employ physical as well as mental activity, that so he may be delivered from moping and brooding.

It is essential that this want of sociability should be cured in children if it comes from any such defects as have been described, and the cure must begin early or it will be altogether useless. Let us study the reasons for the peculiarity evinced by the special child in question, and then see what may be done to remove them. The trouble may be only a temporary one. Perhaps the little one has been too much with older people and is embarrassed at first with those of his own age; perhaps he is morbidly self-conscious, and perhaps he is not well. Let us study to provide suit-

able companions for him, suitable in age, in tastes, and in temperament, remembering that his whole future destiny may possibly be colored by this small sunbonneted maiden or this lad in brief trousers whom we bring to his side. And let us beware of setting him down in a throng of children and expecting him to gambol at once. Do you remember, in that piece of child-study, "Great Expectations," how Miss Havisham took the frightened Pip by the shoulder and fiercely said, "Play, boy, play! Why don't you play?"

Such an admonition naturally chills the blood like sitting down to a dinner shadowed by the hostess's prayer that you will be brilliant.

There is one last remark to be made in this paper, if the writer may be forgiven in advance for a constitutional tendency to dwell upon it, an idea that belongs here by mental and spiritual right, and if we are to do the subject justice it must be introduced.

If you have a child who shows a tendency to alienate himself from his fellows, who has never learned how to combine his plays and occupations with others, and is thus not only missing all the benefits of fellowship and communion, but is setting himself altogether wrong for the practical business of living, then I do believe, and therefore I must speak, that if such a child were early sent to a good kindergarten these evils would be corrected in the bud. If anything can be recommended as a cure for selfishness, tyrannical spirit, morbidity, shyness, listlessness, and too great

precocity in a little child; if anything will prove a help to sluggishness and inertness of mind, it is the kindergarten atmosphere, the Froebelian theories carried out in work and play and everyday religion, under an earnest, intelligent, spiritual-minded woman, who not only understands the principles she is interpreting, but the living, breathing, faulty, wonderful, human creatures under her care.

## THE CHILDREN'S GUILD OF PLAY.

"A great historian many centuries ago wrote it down that the first things conquered in battle are the eyes; the soldier flees from what he sees before. But so often in the world's fight we are defeated by what we look back upon; we are whipped in the end by the things we saw in the beginning of life."

—*James Lane Allen.*

Life is so dreary in the slums; poverty so crushing there. Your own lacks and pains and discomforts are multiplied by the lacks and pains and discomforts in all the other beehive cells pressing upon yours, till you feel the many-sided weight to the very center of your being.

Poverty in the country, where at least you are not scanted of air and space and quiet, is scarcely poverty at all; it is deprivation, but neither stunting nor suffocation. A country child, though he tramp by the side of a gypsy or beggar, or house at night, half fed, half covered, in a tumble-down hovel, is not, after all, so much to be pitied if he have his freedom. That outdoor play-school which Maurice Thompson talks of,—the school of the woods, the fields, the hills, the streams; the school from which the greatest thinkers of the world have been graduated,—this, at least, is open to him, without money and without price. It is the education in ideality, which such tuition gives, which is the great lack of our poor city children, and

this which it seems essential to supply to them, in so far as our limited knowledge and powers admit.

Contrast the play-school of nature with the play-school of man, which is naturally and inevitably the street, and weigh one against the other,—the training given by each.

Plato, in his "Republic," plans his system of education so that the first twenty years of every human life shall be in the main devoted to a nurture of the abiding, deeper, greater self, that it may become easily the master over the other, the transient self. It is to be a training of the unconscious sort; such a feeding of the young mind and the young heart that they shall come to love above all things those which are honorable and intrinsically lovable, and to hate those which are dishonorable and unlovable; so to feed this under self that at length it becomes the masterful self.

We need not pause here to inquire whether or not it would be possible to regulate for such a length of time all the influences surrounding the young human creature; or, even if it were possible, whether we should be sufficiently daring to make the attempt. It is practical and timely, however, to inquire for ourselves just what sort of an unconscious training is given by the play-school of the street, and endeavor to supply to its pupils, as best we may, some of its most glaring deficiencies. That such schooling is altogether evil no one for a moment supposes. Lessons in patience, courage, generosity, and sympathy are

often set there for those who are apt at learning. But the atmosphere is confused, noisy, full of ugly, often brutal, sights and sounds, harsh, sordid, and greatly lacking in reach, insight, vision, and ideality.

It is in the endeavor to supply some of these elements, to touch the imagination and the heart as well as train the body, that the Children's Guild of Play has been organized in London; and because many of the ideas which it is working out are true and valuable ones, it is here described, as a contribution toward the settlement of one of the vexed questions of great cities. The founder of the Guild, Sister Grace of the Bermondsey Settlement, South London, says that it was started "as an attempt to solve the problem of giving the children of our slums a chance of a cleaner life than would seem to be their lot by inheritance." Its proceedings include not only games, singing, and music, but the telling of fairy tales; its meetings are held on one evening in each week, and it is generally found that the managers of Board-schools are willing to throw open one or more of their rooms for these occasions, thus avoiding the expense of rent.

The Bermondsey Settlement Guild is managed by three workers,—musician, play-mistress, and story-teller,—and the exercises are conducted as follows: "Our Guild-evening," says Sister Grace, "begins with the opening of the doors, when little girl children of all ages march in two by two. Sometimes they may have been waiting outside in fog or rain for an hour beforehand. After every one has made a curtsey

and said 'Good evening,' the games begin—quaint old English song-games, with pretty words, rhythmic tunes, and dainty gestures; and then come fairy tales and songs—the three together providing continual motion for restless limbs, voices, and brains. And before we go away we kneel together for the beautiful closing prayers and benediction. That is all."

The Guild has no punishments save those which follow as the natural penalties of broken laws, no rewards save that greatest of all pleasures, the working for others. There are no buns or oranges, no costly toys, no magic-lantern shows, no direct religious teaching; there is not even the giving away of useful information; while the highest prize ever offered is the privilege of being allowed to go and play before the children's own parents, or before old people in the workhouse or infirmary.

It is intended that the Guild of Play shall supplement the brain-training of the day school, and it is considered essential that every helper should personally know, and thus be able to co-operate with, the teachers of all her play-hour children. "The benefits arising from such co-operation will not be all with the children," says the Guild, "nor, as regards teachers and helpers, will they be one-sided. Such comradeship is truest socialism; such workers truly are pioneers in the great march of the coming century."

There is nothing new, it may be said in passing, in the use of music, singing, and games as instruments of education. Plato, Aristotle, Quintilian, Comenius,

Rousseau, Fichte, Pestalozzi, Locke, Spencer, Richter, and Froebel, all had many wise things to say about them; and if, in the endeavor to establish a Guild of Play, we meet persons unwilling to contribute to our needs because doubtful of the benefits accruing, we may batter down their walls of prejudice with arguments drawn from the pages of these great philosophers.

The act of singing in itself is a healthful one, setting the chest to work, expanding the lungs, and making the blood course through the veins with double force, while the gestures and rhythmic activities attendant upon the plays are most valuable for the modern child who is constrained to stillness in the schoolroom for so many hours of each day.

Modern life tends everywhere to the hiving together in cities and the results are seen in the great increase of nervous disorders. That these ailments are present in the bud in many of the pupils of our metropolitan public schools will be attested by any physician who has made a study of them, and oftentimes they are so well advanced as to render a cure a matter of considerable difficulty. "By prolonging the period of play," as one of its best advocates has said, "we shall be providing a counterbalance for this tendency."

"The need of muscle-culture in our great cities is an imperative one," says George E. Johnson, in his monograph on Games and Play; and rhythmic movement in part supplies this need. It is clear, too, that children cannot engage in these singing games

without learning many lessons in self-control and comradeship, and these are valuable qualities, useful every day in life. The imagination must also be trained and the æsthetic faculties cultivated by play and story-telling, and such training is of necessity altogether absent in the education of the ordinary street child. He is precocious, poor infant phenomenon, in all that concerns the practical, while the ideal in him, his powers of loving and dreaming, are crushed and pallid like the growing things under a stone. It is for this reason that carefully selected fairy tales, and fairy tales only, are told to the children of the Guilds, for, as Sister Grace quotes most appropriately, "where there is no vision, the people perish." "A child without imagination," she goes on to say, "will become a man without ideals, with narrow sympathies here, and little interest or treasure in the great Unknown Land. Wherefore let us kindle imagination; and for this purpose we know of no better instruments than fairy tales."

The children are happy on these golden evenings of song and play and story, as we well may fancy; and happiness is not only their right but their necessity if they are to develop properly in mind, soul, and body. It is surely not much to ask of those who have everything in life which these little ones lack, that they should give an hour or two a week of their leisure to a service of love, such as the Guild of Play.

It may be that American guilds would be conducted on different lines, in some respects, from those

of the Bermondsey Settlement. There seems no reason, for instance, why boys as well as girls should not have the benefit of games and singing, though their organizations might not be conducted in the same way. It would seem probable, too, that plays might be found superior to the old English singing games in some respects, and full as rich in the desired elements of repetition, succession, sequence, dialogue, rhythm, and rhyme. And when the children have grown to know one another and to feel the influence of their leader, we may plainly see that all the ends we are striving to gain would be more easily attained by a country play-hour when weather and season are favorable. Although the trolley seems to some of us an impertinent attack upon the retirement of rural life and a noisy, vexatious interruption to quiet and seclusion, yet it cannot be denied that it takes away from him who hath to give to him who hath not and so is one factor among the great leveling tendencies of modern social conditions.

Thousands of green fields are now easily and cheaply accessible to the dwellers in great cities where a few years ago they were only to be reached by horse or bicycle power and thus we may, with very little expenditure of time or money, transport our Guilds to the country since the country cannot come to them.

Again, when we consider the literary side of the undertaking, there are numberless stories and poems, outside of the realm of fairy-lore, which would serve our purposes occasionally, but these are variations

upon the original theme which would occur to anyone who was sufficiently interested in it, and when all is said, it is the spirit of the enterprise which will be found to be its important element.

It is vitally important, too, that the right kind of persons should manage the Play Guilds. The work is not for teachers worn out with the nervous strain of the day; it is not for the toilers either among men or women; it is for those who are fresh, bright, joyous, unworn by care or labor, whose own sheltered youth and prolonged opportunities for many kinds of play have preserved in them their vigor and optimism and who can lift the children above the pressure of the street on the wings of their own life-joy.

# THE GUILD OF THE BRAVE POOR THINGS.

"It is to be called the Book of Poor Things, mother dear. It 's a collection—a collection of Poor Things who 've been hurt, like me; or blind, like the organ-tuner; or had their legs or their arms chopped off in battle, and are very good and brave about it, and manage very, very nearly as well as people who have got nothing the matter with them. Father does n't think Poor Things is a good name. He wanted to call it Masters of Fate, because of some poetry. What was it, father?"

"'Man is man, and master of his fate,'" quoted the Master of the House.

"Yes, that 's it. But I don't understand it so well as Poor Things. They *are* Poor Things, you know, and of course we shall only put in brave Poor Things, not cowardly Poor Things."

If you ever happened to meet a little lad named Leonard, who lives in the pages of Mrs. Ewing's "Story of a Short Life," then you will remember, with misty eyes and an ache in the throat, that chapter wherein the hero directs from his wheeled chair the ruling and printing and illuminating of his Book of Brave Poor Things.

The child has been the victim of an accident, which not only makes him a cripple, but racks him with distress and pain, and, under the nervous strain of the affliction and the consequent "spoiling," he has become capricious, tyrannical, a torment to himself and to others. Fortunately, when things have reached a climax of wretchedness, his wise mother comes to

the rescue, and, appealing to the boy's courage, his sense of honor, and to his passionate interest in soldiers and soldierly qualities, teaches him that, though a military life can never now be his, he yet may be "a brave cripple." The ancestral motto of the family, *Laetus sorte mea,* is so interpreted to the child that he grows to feel it a matter of duty to be happy with his fate, and begins to think that perhaps there are "lots of brave afflicted people, and perhaps there never was anybody but him who was n't so."

Leonard has a touching interview with a hero of the Victoria Cross, in which, true to his great life-interest, he is intent on finding out whether, if he is very good and patient about a lot of pain in his back and his head, that would count up to be as brave as having one wound if he 'd been a soldier; and whether being ill in bed might count like being a soldier in a hospital.

"I suppose nothing—not even if I could be good always, from this minute right away till I die—nothing could ever count up to the courage of a V. C.?" questions the boy, wistfully; and the brave, tender-hearted wearer of the priceless bit of iron answers tremulously, "God knows it could, a thousand times over!"

Leonard, and the Book which he thought out so carefully, suggested to Sister Grace the formation in the Bermondsey Settlement, South London, of the Guild of the Brave Poor Things. It is an association of men, women, and children, of any creed or no

creed, who are crippled, blind, or maimed in any way. Anyone is eligible for membership if thus afflicted and if at the same time he is resolved to make a good fight in life. *Laetus sorte mea,* Happy in my Lot, is the watchword of the Guild; and its hymn, the one which Mrs. Ewing's hero called the Tug-of-War hymn, because, at the military chapel which he often attended, the soldiers sang the verse beginning, "A noble army, men and boys," with such tremendous impetus and vigor that, after a brief contest, they invariably pulled away from the organ and the whole choir.

The deepest purpose of the Guild, says Sister Grace, is found in this verse of the hymn:

> "Who best can drink His cup of woe,
> Triumphant over pain;
> Who patient bears His Cross below,
> He follows in His train."

It is by "awakening the heroic that slumbers in every heart," and by teaching its members that the courage to bear and the courage to dare are really one and the same, that the Guild lives up to its motto; for its founder believes that it is not enough patiently to accept one's life-burden, but that one must also learn to bear it cheerfully. If it be heavy it is all the more a proof of strength and valor to support its weight bravely and in such fashion that each soldier in the suffering army may profit by the spirit and enthusiasm of the comrade marching by his side.

It is inherent in the very idea of the Guild that

it should bring light and brightness into cold, gray lives; and so, in every room in which it meets, the walls are draped with the Union Jack, and high above shines out in brilliant scarlet letters the watchword, *Laetus sorte mea.* There are badges, membership cards, and banners, all in red, the soldier's color, and the true military spirit is insisted upon in every way.

"It is important," says Sister Grace, "to guard against anything like a sentimental glorification of suffering; and, to shut out such a possibility, the Guild must have a knowledge of the conditions of life of all its members, and must be ready to do everything that can be done to minimize their actual distresses." It is not a charity, however, and does not give relief; it is merely a friendly organization of afflicted persons meeting frequently with leaders who are interested in their troubles and who can give strength and courage to bear them more bravely. Where relief must be given, it is done through other societies, and so there is no asking nor giving here, save in the things of the spirit.

The Guild of Brave Poor Things was organized in 1894, and so great a need has it apparently met, and so well has it taken advantage of the "together" spirit of the age, that it now has six branches, with a membership of more than five hundred. It is a pitiful thought that there are so many persons in one locality who belong by right to such a club, but even more pitiful would it be were nothing done to lighten their double woes of poverty and disease.

The various things necessary to a successful conduct of the Guild are thus stated by Sister Grace:

1. To visit members in their own homes and establish personal links between the workers and members.

2. To hold regular meetings at stated intervals for games, singing, and social intercourse.

3. To bring, as far as possible, technical classes and suitable lectures within the reach of members of the Guild; to arrange for periodical excursions, concerts, etc., for them, together with any other means of widening their necessarily restricted lives.

The Guild's rules are few and simple: merely that the name, motto, and hymn shall be the same in all branches, that flags shall always be used in the decoration of the rooms, that the soldierly virtues of loyalty and prompt obedience be cultivated in every way, and that records be kept of the name, address, and condition of each member.

And what are the proceedings at the Guild meetings? you ask.

These may be held either in the afternoon or evening, and so great is the interest in them that many of the members gather at the entrance long before opening time, reminding one of that even in Capernaum when the sun did set and when they brought unto Him all that were sick of divers diseases, and all the city was gathered together at the door.

There are blind people here; there are deaf-mutes; there are paralytics who can drag themselves along,

and others who must be pushed in chairs or perambulators; there are as many phases of distress and deformity, perhaps, as there are persons, and all ages are represented; but there is much good-fellowship, and constant helpfulness.

Tables are set in the Guild-room, where books and papers and magazines are scattered for those of seeing eyes; there is a piano for the blind; there is a lending library from which books may be taken home; there are toys for the younger children; and there is always a painting table, for it seems that mottoes and pictures to color are in great demand the year around.

Many of the blind women bring their knitting or other handiwork and chat quietly together as their busy fingers move; the men fall into conversation over the games and pictures, and thus the grace of friendship is added to these lives of deprivation and suffering.

In many of the Guilds weekly half-hour lectures on science, history, and travel are given, and seem to be greatly enjoyed; and always when games and lectures and conversation are over there is the ever-delightful singing practice. If any of the members are found to have special musical ability, or a knack at recitation, they are encouraged to help in entertainment, and considerable talent is thus discovered and a new value given to the self-estimate of the possessor.

At the close of the exercises the roll is always called, each soldier of the army, from baby to gray-beard, answering to his name, and then comes Leon-

ard's "Tug-of-War" hymn, for which all stand, or at least assume as nearly erect a position as weak limbs and twisted spines will allow.

It is their battle-hymn, and if with its echoes ringing in their ears they can go back to their poor homes and quit themselves like men, if they can fly their scarlet banner with its joyous motto, if they can fight the battle of life with courage, heavily weighted as they are, then indeed may they be called the bravest army that ever went forth to warfare.

## THE SOCIAL INCLOSURE OF CHILDHOOD.

"It is not only likely—it is inevitable—that the child make up his personality, under limitations of heredity, by imitation, out of the 'copy' set in the actions, temper, emotions, of the persons who build around him the social inclosure of his childhood."

—*J. M. Baldwin.*

THERE is an old Spanish proverb which runs, "Tell me with whom thou walkest and I will tell thee who thou art," and if we were to invent a game calling for pithy sayings from all languages on any given subject we should probably find that the greatest number would cluster about the influence of companionship. We need no further proof that the topic has always been prominent in the attention of men and we may easily conjecture that the nucleus of thought on the subject came from arboreal foremothers who plucked their offspring away from undesirable playmates and, as they tossed them into their own trees, sharply queried why they never could be content at home.

Rousseau felt so strongly that out of the three educations which life brings to us,—the education of nature, circumstances, and other men,—only the last could be partially controlled, that he proposed, as you remember, absolutely to isolate his "Emile" from the rest of the world.

This idea is of course quite impracticable and.

even if it were not so, would be undesirable, for it is not so much the object of education to keep the human being away from temptation as to render him proof against it. It never was of any use, you know, to wall the princess up in the high stone tower, for the prince always came that way, and when other means of ingress failed he climbed up the golden ladder of her braided locks.

To keep children away from companionship is impossible, and the only course remaining is to see that it be of the best. The modern demands of education require the mother to be so Argus-eyed that it is no wonder if she misses seeing something now and then in one and another direction, but if she is sightless or of weak vision here, the matter is a serious one. It is difficult to realize perhaps that the flaxen-haired, blue-ginghamed dumpling "playing house" with your daughter over there can be any more important in her influence than the robin that sings in the bough above them, but if you think so you will be mistaken,—seriously, perhaps fatally, mistaken. Little Blue Gingham may easily, if she have time enough, taint your child's mind for life, and the taint will be the more enduring if the mind be an imaginative one. She may implant vicious thoughts, ideas, and images there, which it will require years of struggle to drive out, or rather to suppress, for they can never be altogether driven out. You are thoughtless of danger because you know the inheritance of your own child and know that she is flower-like in

purity. How much do you know of little Blue Gingham, pray, that you leave the two children together those long uninterrupted hours?

It is a much-discussed question whether parents should choose their children's companions for them, or allow them to make their own selection. Certainly the latter, we would say upon reflection, proper surveillance being afterwards exercised upon the chosen friend and upon his influence. It is to be remembered that these boys and girls of ours, tiny as they may be, are already possessed of independent individualities and have their own fancies and characteristics. It is by no means to be assumed that their tastes in personality are the same as our own, and when we select some neat and proper "Miss Nancy" and present him to Jack as "such a sweet little playfellow" it is not unlikely that Jack will find him intolerably dull and prefer the company of Patsy Hogan over in the alley. And we should reflect, before we send Patsy flying home, that though he be neither any too clean, nor his clothing any too whole, yet he may after all be a better boy than Miss Nancy and have a better influence.

No, it is inevitable that the child should commonly find his companions in the families of those who build his social inclosure about him, but within those limits let him do his own selecting and see only that you watch the playmate carefully, as well as the influence he is exerting.

The little child is daily creating himself from the material about him and it is, as Emerson said, the

things of which he is not thinking that are educating him. If the mother can supply him with good models at this juncture Froebel tells us that she can accomplish by a touch light as a feather what later she could hardly do by a hundredweight of words. The child must imitate, he can only grow by imitation, therefore observe him closely and note the unfolding of his nature and the possibilities for good or evil that it discloses.

You may think if the evil tendencies are there, that he will inevitably develop them sooner or later, no matter what influences surround him now. Not at all. So long as the earth rolls the Jack will never come out of the box unless you loosen the cover, and if he stays down in the dark long enough his mechanism will so rust that he cannot jump at all.

Give serious attention to the child's playfellows then, watch their effect in his speech and in his temper and mannerisms, and keep so close to his heart that he is willing to tell you something of his thoughts and feelings. In no other way can you so protect him from evil and give him a bias toward good as in providing him with the right companions.

And are these only to be found among other children? you ask. Ah no, the matter is not so simple a one as that. The growing human being needs the companionship of nature as well, the sweet influence of trees and birds and winds and the sense of responsibility and tenderness engendered in his heart by the dependence of his pets upon him.

Later, when the mysteries of the printed page are opened to him, the papers and magazines and books which he reads are wisely to be selected: and here is a potent influence for good or evil not sufficiently considered. Search your own recollections and consult child-students of to-day in choosing this literature, for there are certain ages which imperiously demand certain kinds of reading and will have it by one means or another. If the boy of eight to ten years cannot get "Robinson Crusoe," or "The Jungle Books," he will read the adventures of "Red Dog, Blue Horse and Ghost-that-lies-in-the-Wood," and learn to content himself with Brummagem jewelry when he might have had pure gems of radiance and color.

And when we have done all these things so far as our limited knowledge admits, shall we not think of the child's earliest, best, nearest companions, those whose faces are the first he sees, whose hands the first he grasps, whose words the first he understands, whose lives encompass him as the blue depths the star? If aught be amiss with this dear companionship, rough is the road for childish feet to climb and dark indeed the skies that bend above the little pilgrim.

Underneath all other friendships this rests firm, strong and steadfast and as the dewdrop exhales from the sea to wander above in independent life, but still returns at last to mingle with the waters that gave it birth, so the child-heart, after each new journey into the unknown, slips back again into the great profound of father and mother love.

## DAME NATURE'S PLAY-SCHOOL.

"If so the swiftness of the wind
Might pass into my feet;
If so the sweetness of the wheat
Into my soul might pass,
And the clear courage of the grass."

—*E. R. Sill.*

"Every third generation should be rolled in the dust," said Henry Ward Beecher; and the great divine was right in this, as in many another thing, whether he meant that the race needs frequently to go back to first principles and begin over again, or whether he thought only of the Herculean myth and the strength the earth gives out to those who lean upon her bosom.

As the love of nature was the dominant passion of the primitive world, so it lives again in the little child, who is ever re-making history in his own personality. He is a natural tiller of the ground, a natural observer and collector, and all he needs is opportunity, a hint of encouragement, and a word of direction, to mount these hobbies and gallop bravely off on all sorts of delightful and profitable journeys.

For once in the year, at least, many children are given the key of the fields, or the freedom of the seashore and, overcome by the possibilities before them, stand uncertain what to do. Nor are their small country cousins prepared to lead them in most cases, for children, and indeed grown persons, who live in

the very midst of nature's wonders, often go about, like falcons, hooded from the light.

How shall we teach these little ones to see, and what shall we teach them to do? for they cannot be happy, even in vacation, if they have not some kind of regular employment. Spring and summer are the golden times of the year for watching living and growing things, for investigation and experiment, and there is no better way to compass all these ends than to plant and tend a garden. Give the child a small plot of ground ready spaded and dressed, then, and let him sow a few hardy, quick-growing flower and vegetable seeds, fencing the plot afterwards, watering and weeding it. No matter if he only sows lettuce and sunflowers, his products will still combine the useful and the beautiful, and one plant is as good as another for observing the wonders of germination and growth.

Teach him also in these summer days how to pluck flowers, cutting them carefully with proper length of stem, and by leaving a few specimens on each plant securing against the entire extermination of the species. The natural desire of the child seems to be to tear up whole families and plantations of flowers, roots and all, with one fierce tug, a desire which, gratified often, soon rids a country-side of its natural decorations as effectually as if fire and sword had been laid to them. Gathered in such careless fashion they are as carelessly guarded, and one frequently knows that a junior naturalists' club has been in the vicinity, merely

by the clusters of faded blossoms lying in the dust of the roadway, by broken branches, trodden leaves and grass, and a general effect in once flowery nooks and bowers of beauty as if a herd of wild mustangs on the stampede had trampled through them.

Children need commonly to learn that it is possible to love and admire a flower, indeed to study it and know its characteristics, and still leave it on the parent stem. As Monckton Milnes said:—

> "Simply enjoy the present loveliness!
> Let it become a portion of your being!
> Close your glad gaze, but see it none the less;
> No clearer with your eye, than spirit, seeing.
> And when you part at last, turn once again,
> Swearing that beauty shall be unforgot."

When this lesson has been mastered and the further one of handling the blossom respectfully when it becomes necessary to cut it, we may, if large gardens or fields of wild flowers are at our command, instruct our pupil how to make up posies for hospital or flower mission work, and even before he attains to the degree of carefulness and dexterity necessary for this labor of love, he may be engaged as a helper at watering-time, a little inevitable splashing and spilling being wisely overlooked.

For still younger children there are many delightful plays with materials drawn from nature's toy-shop. There are wreaths and garlands to be made of leaves and flowers; there are chains of lilacs and dandelions and daisies and four o'clocks, there are nuts and seeds

to be strung, there are dolls of poppy seed-cups to be dressed and tea-sets to be made from the same materials and from acorns. Then there are charming ladies with long dresses to fashion from morning glories; tiny leaf hats and bonnets to be fastened together with thorns and twigs; furniture to be made of burdock burrs; rose pancakes to mix, rose petals to gather for potpourri; mud pies to bake in small tins, and leaves and twigs and ferns to press into wet sand, making attractive designs and borders. On rainy days the leaves and ferns may be cut from green paper and mounted on cardboard; or, if there is a clay bank near, the heavier ones may be impressed upon clay plaques of various shapes which may afterwards be baked in a slow oven.

The study of the birds of a neighborhood might occupy every waking hour of a whole company of children for an entire summer, first learning to watch them quietly and unobtrusively, either with their own bright eyes or with an opera-glass, then with the aid of a bird-book becoming acquainted with their names; next studying their habits, their ways of nest-building, their songs and calls, their special services to man, and making as thorough an investigation as may be possible of their favorite foods. If an older person will record these observations of the children they may be found really valuable in the preservation of bird life, and a remedy may thus be discovered for the startling decrease of our native songsters in many parts of the country.

Dr. C. F. Hodge of Clark University, who is an acknowledged authority on the subject, tells us that during the last fifteen years this decrease in thirty of our states and territories amounts to forty-six per cent, and he suggests that children be taught to make safe places of shelter and bird-houses for their feathered friends, and especially to provide them with food in bad winters. Their houses should be built with perches or a tiny platform below each door, should be made of proper proportions and placed at a safe height from the ground.* One live bird, Dr. Hodge calculates, may be worth one hundred dollars a year to a community, so considerations of economy as well as sentiment may well urge us on to the task of caring for them. Dr. Hodge also suggests, as a useful autumn occupation for children, that they be taught to take a census each season of the birds in their own localities by counting the nests after the leaves have fallen. Thus some reliable information will be gathered as to the gradual increase or decrease of our bird-neighbors year by year.

Then there are the insects to be studied, the valuable little ladybug or ladybird, loved by all children; the ants, bees, and wasps; the hornets, spiders, dragon flies, and butterflies; the potato bugs and cucumber bugs with their shining striped coats, and much of real importance is to be learned as to their food, their time of appearance, their transformations, and

*For plans, proportions and designs, see Cornell Nature Study Leaflets and Bulletins, No. 10, April 10, 1898.

their ability to serve or injure man. If we knew the true relation between birds and insects it is said that we could entirely transform our insect-ridden land in two decades, but to do this, authoritative information must be disseminated. Dr. Hodge makes an interesting calculation on this subject. "The school system of the United States," he says, "costs $420,000,000 a year, while authorities on the subject estimate that insects destroy crops to the value of between $300,000,000 and $400,000,000 yearly. Children can save the larger portion of this vast sum and have a most delightful time during their work by learning something of nature and applying their knowledge to the assistance of those species of birds that will destroy noxious insects."

It is doubtful whether the aforesaid children would be at all stimulated in any such task by a realization of the immense sum they would thereby be saving the country, and they would scarcely be impressed even by knowing that they were earning their own tuition by their labors. Four hundred and twenty millions of dollars is an impossible sum to realize and the mere work of reading the numbers would be fatiguing to a youthful naturalist, but if "those set in authority over him" should ever complain of the long hours he spends a-birding he can offer as his best excuse the mints of money he is thus virtually helping his beloved country to save.

Bats, snakes, toads, frogs, earthworms—the names of the quintette are not attractive, but it is unlikely

that they would ever be repulsive to children if they were properly introduced, and it is certain that none of them, save possibly the snake in some parts of the country, would be at all harmful. The bat, for instance, if he can be gently caught and kept under glass for an hour while he is examined, is generally attractive to children and is never afterward feared if his work in the world is explained.

As to toads and frogs, among the most interesting and useful of all animals, they may easily be studied either in neighboring ponds or in a home-made aquarium, from the egg to the bright-eyed, beautifully dappled grown-up creature.

It is estimated that one toad eats in a single season cutworms that would else have destroyed twenty dollars worth of crops, the family services in this direction being so well known in France that they are sold by the dozen in that enlightened country for the protection of gardens.

During last summer's drought certain members of a junior naturalists' club were so much impressed by this information, as well as by the yeoman's service done by the tree-toad in destroying insects and the unceasing labors of the frog at the same task, that they became alarmed at the way the tadpoles were dying off and, translating their faith into works, scooped many of them up in tins and carried them to a better supply of water.

From zoölogy we turn to the wide and not less interesting field of botany, and here the subject of

collections naturally comes up. All the children of a neighborhood may join in this work, from the toddler to the boy in his teens. A pleasant task is to gather, mount, and mark a certain number, say fifteen each, of the leaves, flowers, seeds, and grasses of a district, keeping leaves of trees in one category, of shrubs and flowering plants in another and so on.

If any prudent parent should fear that quests such as these collections would entail, over wood and field and meadow, would bring danger in the form of poison to the child, who naturally touches and handles everything he passes, we may answer that there are, after all, very few poisonous leaves or berries in our country and that these are easily distinguishable by appearance or odor. As Froebel says, "Each one of these plants utters its own word of warning."

William Hamilton Gibson in his "Sharp Eyes" tells us that there is one page of botany which every dweller in the country should learn, that which deals with the Rhus or sumach. There are five species more or less common in the eastern part of the United States, but it appears that only two of these are poisonous, and Mr. Gibson offers several verses conveying information as to their appearance,—jingles which can be learned in a moment by any child and which will serve as mental talismans against danger.

Ferns, shells, and sea-moss make equally good collections, of course, and there is scope for considerable ingenuity, suited to the various ages of the col-

lectors, in gathering the desired objects and devising ways of preserving them.

For juvenile scientists, old enough for a moderately late bedtime, there is unlimited and fascinating occupation in studying the heavenly bodies. With a field glass and a chart they can con every night the blue page of the sky, learn the names and characteristic colors of the stars, spy out the nebulæ or satellites, and by day study the mythological fancies woven about them.

For still older children, there are the common minerals and rocks to learn,—not a difficult task with all the modern manuals on the subject, and boys especially seem to take great delight in gathering specimens and in making cabinets to hold them.

A child who is really interested in Nature's serial story and who is old enough to write, will probably be delighted if he is given a diary in which he can record the happenings of every day of the season,—not only rainfall and sunshine, but the dates when the frogs begin to trill, when the various leaves unfold, when the different birds appear and disappear, when each flower of the long procession makes its bow, when the white butterflies come and the grasshoppers begin to whir and the crickets to chirp and the wasps to make friendly calls. Books already prepared may be had for this purpose, but an ordinary blank book with stout covers is as good,—is really better in fact, for it gives scope for individuality in choice of subject, arrangement, and decoration.

It is generally found that all this nature work and study is made much more attractive if a number of children take it up together and band themselves into a club, which should be given an attractive name. An older person is needed as Secretary or Grand Adviser of such an association to direct the work, to record observations and mark specimens. Such a Grand Adviser will find the summer catalogues of all the publishers rich with books on birds, reptiles, insects, flowers, trees, fishes, ferns, stars, and rocks, most of them provided with plates, colored or uncolored, and all pleasantly familiar in style and adapted to the needs of a tyro in science.

Nature stories, too, the Grand Adviser will find very useful at the meetings of her society, to give a fillip to general interest, and poetry will furnish needful inspiration, for literature is ever the useful handmaid of art and science.

## SHOOTING FOLLY AS IT FLIES.

"Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
But vindicate the ways of God to man."

—*Alexander Pope.*

THERE are many kinds of philanthropists. Some found free libraries and orphan asylums and foundling homes; some give to foreign missions and historical societies; some support soup kitchens and temperance restaurants; others endow chairs in universities and fit out polar expeditions. There are others still who are retail dealers in the virtue, as it were, and do their good deeds in a small way, in accordance with their capital. Of this last class was a certain New England lover of nature, who gave his whole time to preserving fine trees from vandalism, driving wherever it was reported that a tree was to be cut down and paying the sum demanded, that it might stand as a perpetual joy to the neighborhood. Another dear saint, whose memory is still green, devoted a portion of his income every year to dispatching letters held for postage; and an eminent author whom we all admire, owns, as his philanthropic hobby, a manful attempt to lessen the sum of error in the world, by contradicting, in polite notes to the editor, any statement seen in the periodicals of the day which he can

prove to be false. This interesting whim leads him a busy and a vexatious life; but in one case, at least, and to-day, the present writer is resolved to emulate his example.

There seems to be a distinct impression in some quarters of this country that the kindergarten is a sort of Mahometan Paradise, where children recline on flowery beds of ease, lulled by soft music, their only exertion being to open their mouths occasionally that they may receive the mental and spiritual blessings that drop from the gilded clouds above.

A few representative extracts cut from some of our prominent papers in the last two months will illustrate this point of view.

*a.* "The *'laissez faire'* treatment of children, which the kindergarten exploits."

*b.* "Young people did want to learn something once from those who cared for them, before the universal 'kindergartening'" (Jove, give us patience!) "brought to them, without exertion, all that they once imbibed by discipline and by the restraint of learning submissively and with effort."

*c.* "The kindergarten weakness is that it fails to recognize the fact that life is not all pleasure, and that children must learn to do things which are disagreeable,—the grim Puritanical idea, which makes men and women of backbone and moral fiber."

*d.* "The experiment of the kindergarten system has yet to demonstrate its values, and older people doubt whether the discipline of work for work's sake,

and obedience out of respect for authority will find an adequate substitute in the plan where Jack's experience is all play and no work. May kindergarten graduates find themselves prepared to meet the trials and disappointments of a world which has often demanded in its successful combatants the bracing preparation of early hardship and neglect."

Here are five distinct indictments of the kindergarten;—its *"laissez faire"* treatment of children, the indirect statement that it teaches without effort on the child's part or discipline on its own, a suggestion that its methods produce neither backbone nor moral fiber, an implication that it cultivates disobedience and scorn of authority, and finally a pious hope that its graduates may be able to meet the trials and disappointments of this troublous world,—a hope whose tone reminds us of Reynard's politeness when he brought the duck to his kennel.

Perhaps you are not familiar with the story; but it is rumored that he said, as he dropped the fluttering creature among his hungry cubs, "I trust you 've had a pleasant ride, ma'am, and will enjoy yourself this evening."

As there is no smoke without some fire, it is safe to suppose that the writers of these and similar criticisms may have seen certain specimens of kindergarten training which merited, in part at least, the diatribes directed against them; but granting this point, what logic or justice is there in condemning an entire educational system because of some local fault of inter-

pretation? Do we flout the modern schools of medicine because unskilled practitioners kill their patients now and then? Do we condemn electric lighting because a stray wire may occasionally be deadly? Do we jeer at Christianity because its votaries, sometimes fall from grace?

This matter of the kindergarten is too vital a one, its issues too far-reaching, to be court-martialed and sentenced in this summary fashion. If indeed, when interpreted according to the precepts of its founder, it can be proven in the majority of cases to cultivate idleness, love of luxury, weakness, lack of moral fiber and energy, disobedience, misrule, and anarchy, then the sooner it is swept from the face of the earth the better for the nations thereof. If, on the contrary, these charges are unfounded, when made against the system considered as a whole, then a great wrong is being done to a profound educational philosophy devoutly believed in by large and increasing numbers of people.

The charge that it fosters idleness might easily be refuted, it would seem, for the most ignorant onlooker could not but agree that there is no busier creature than a kindergarten child. His hands are literally never still; for when he is not occupied at his table, he is joyfully active in song and play. Nor is this occupation at the table anything which is forced upon him, which he does with little grace, drops as soon as possible, and neglects if the eye of authority be not upon him. It is done eagerly and

with delight, because it is worth doing and he loves it. If this is not "work for work's sake,"—a motive which our last critic affects to consider as out of date, where may we find a clearer illustration of the phrase? for there is no reward connected with the industry, save that of success, and the finished product is commonly bestowed upon others. So far is the kindergarten child from idleness, that another class of critics cries out that he is being forced and overworked and that he is frequently made nervous by excess of industry.

The charge that Froebel's system of education cultivates luxurious habits scarcely needs a moment's consideration. If keeping the pupil in a bright clean room, gay with plants and flowers, and hung with appropriate pictures, is breeding in him a love of luxury, then the Creator's idea of the earth as a training school for man must be a wholly mistaken one; and if the baby may not employ himself with brilliant colors and graceful forms, though fashioned from the plainest and most universal materials, then the promptings of Nature for playing with brightness must be altogether disregarded and set at naught.

The statement that the kindergarten produces weakness and lack of energy in the pupil evidently springs from the belief that every experience comes to him ready made in that enchanted region; that he is a little pitcher which passively allows itself to be filled, in the Gradgrind fashion, with imperial gallons of facts.

If there is any one idea in the whole range of educational thought, upon which Froebel insisted and re-insisted, upon which he lectured and theorized, and which he conceived that he had finally reduced to practice, it was that of self-activity on the part of the learner; and it would seem extremely difficult so to conduct a kindergarten as to hurl from its place one of the chief stones of its foundation. It is not to be supposed, because the work is agreeable to the child, that it is therefore so easy as to require no effort on his part. It is for the joy that is set before him that he endures the difficulties, and because he has once tasted the pleasures of success that he is willing to labor.

No one who is familiar with the everyday handiwork of kindergarten children and knows how neat and well-wrought and artistic it commonly is,—no one who knows this and at the same time knows the powers and capabilities of children from three to six years old, could for a moment doubt, it might be supposed, that it was executed by dint of the greatest industry, energy, ardor, patience and perseverance.

That children enjoy putting forth such efforts is quite true; but one would imagine that this fact might place the matter in a still more favorable light. No one doubts the statement of one of our critics that the world often demands of its successful combatants the bracing preparation of early hardship and neglect; but it can hardly be seriously supposed that an edu-

cational system for babies could successfully be built upon such a foundation.

It is true enough that many of the world's heroes struggled up through bitter waters of trial to the sunlight above, but who is to say that such experiences are fitted for the non-hero, for the ordinary mortal who is not called upon to do great deeds or think great thoughts but simply to perform his own share of the world's work and to help a fainting brother here and there?

Another skeptic, evidently a blood-relation of the writer whose criticisms we are now considering, lately complained in a Boston paper, that schooling nowadays from kindergarten to university is far too pleasurable a process, opined that the school should be a sort of drill-ground for the stern realities of life and predicted that having had no previous experience in hardships the modern child would be conquered by the first attack of life's natural woes.

This is a specious sort of reasoning,—one that when first considered seems to have some elements of good sense about it and yet, after all, looked at more closely, they melt away quickly enough. As a wise man said the other day in discussing the value of a happy, sheltered childhood: "Does n't everybody know from observation that nine times out of ten the man who has been gently bred, with every puff of an ill wind kept from him by loving hands, meets a great disaster when it comes with a grace or a defiance, as the case may be, seldom seen in men who from baby-

hood up have known almost nothing but hard knocks? Somehow the 'training process' has taken the stamina out of such social victims—has depleted their courage so that the great ill, when it comes, overwhelms them completely, at least for a time."

And now the question as to lack of moral fiber in the kindergarten graduate. What does this mean, exactly? Probably that the child is selfish, capricious, unscrupulous, tyrannical, and perhaps untruthful. Certainly such children have been seen in many kindergartens; but similar monsters have ere now issued from decent, well-ordered homes, and nobody has therefore cried out upon the sacred institution of the family!

How can a system of training which was framed to teach helpfulness, the value of co-operation, the beauty of brotherly love and the joy of working for others, degenerate, even under unfavorable conditions, into a nursery for selfishness?

How can a system whose tools of education are evolved systematically one from the other, and interconnected; whose plays, of whatever kind, are logical developments of thought; whose products require sustained, purposeful and continuous effort;—how can such a system, when administered by even a moderate intelligence, develop capriciousness?

How can a training which leads a child uniformly to consider the weaklings and younglings of the flock, to observe that leadership in any line is synonymous with worthiness, to note that "all are needed by each

one" and that his own powers, no matter how great, are lost without co-operation;—how can this training develop a tyrant?

And how can a system which neither terrorizes, nor punishes revengefully; which endeavors to teach fair-dealing and loving kindness; which daily gives concrete experience with the connection of cause and effect, with error and its natural result, with wrong-doing and retribution; which aims to cultivate clear seeing, clear thinking and clear speaking within its small range of subjects;—how can it justly be charged with fostering unscrupulousness and falsehood?

As to the *"laissez faire"* treatment of children, we might answer that in one sense, the phrase very well illustrates kindergarten procedure. We do believe, if you choose to put the matter in that way, in letting the children alone to a certain extent, believing that like trees, if they are set in the right soil, in the right climate, properly cultivated and under the right atmospheric conditions, they may be trusted to do their own growing.

Our critic, however, has nothing of this in mind; his meaning is closely allied to the last indictment, that of the child-garden as a school of disobedience, misrule, and anarchy. This complaint is more often seen than any of the others, and in any kindergarten center, one or two institutions could perhaps be found which would come dangerously near furnishing the prosecuting attorney in the case with evidence leading toward conviction.

The fact is that Froebel's ideal in discipline is a difficult one to reach; and since kindergartners are only ordinary women, it is the less wonder that they sometimes fail to attain unto it. It must be a discipline which has nothing of formalism or rigidity about it; it must exist by consent of the governed; it must be free and elastic, and yet it must implant a reverence for law, order, and authority in each one of the embryo citizens for whom it is maintained. No one doubts that the practical workings of a despotism are simpler than those of a republic, and it was a republic that Froebel desired to make of his training school for babies.

To suppose, however, that a good, or even a fairly good, kindergarten tolerates disobedience, or allows lawlessness or anarchy within its bounds, is the greatest of mistakes. There is no better discipline when the proper person is at the head of affairs, and none more ideal, because it aims to make each individual self-governing. Order is an essential part of every exercise of the day; a reverence for law is constantly instilled in every study whose beginnings the child takes up; and under these conditions and with the right hand at the helm, the ship glides along on an even keel, her sails filled with the winds of peace and harmony.

It must always be easier to handle a simple tool than a fine and delicate instrument; anybody can whittle, but not everybody can manage a turning lathe. If the kindergarten fails here and there, as it

does of necessity fail, as everything must sometimes fail whose management is intrusted to human intelligence, we need not use these failures to discredit the principles upon which the system is based. We may disbar the unworthy practitioner, but we do not therefore cry out upon the law.

An adopted citizen of this country (the Hon. Carl Schurz), one who is more truly an American than many who were born on the soil, lately said a few things in discussing the failures of a democratic government which are not only valuable in themselves, but of application here. "Indeed," he said, "our government has had its failures and will have more. Honest and earnest criticism of those failures—even, if need be, the most searching and merciless—is a good citizen's duty. So is the pointing out of threatening dangers. But criticism and the pointing out of danger must never have the object of discouraging wise and vigorous effort for improvement. If they do, they degenerate into that dreary pessimism which, whenever something goes wrong, cries out that everything is lost. If the pessimist who employs his criticism to prove democratic government a failure would apply the same spirit and method of criticism to monarchical or aristocratic governments, he would easily prove them failures, too—and, in some respects, failures of a worse kind. In fact, he would prove any and every form of government a failure, ending in the demonstration of the failure of the universe."

# THE PERSONALITY OF THE KINDERGARTEN TRAINING TEACHER.

"How can I hear what you say when what you are is thundering in my ears?"

—*R. W. Emerson.*

Although the work of the Fates once done is done forever, although they have never been persuaded to take up again a task once fallen from their hands, yet no one supposes, I fancy, that their skill is unerring, nor that there are not some days when they would not be the better for a competent overseer.

It is obvious that Atropos, as she severs the thread of human life, sometimes snips it too quickly, and sometimes lets it run through her hands too long. If this were not so, why should some persons keep on living whose absence from the earth would greatly enhance its attractions, and some be taken away whose permanent presence seems the one thing desirable? Nor are the other weird sisters more trustworthy. Clotho is not a faultless workwoman, for it appears that she does not always spin her thread of the same tensile strength. It may be the fault of Lachesis, who, being a gifted person, is possibly subject to moods, and may not twirl the spindle at the same rate on every day of the week. It is difficult to fix the responsibility for the deviations, but obviously the thread turned out is by no means uniform, some of it

being thick enough for a hawser, and some fine enough to hem a cambric handkerchief.

It is not so surprising, then, that we sometimes fail to get the right quality for the required purpose, since we commonly do not trouble to select from a large assortment, but rather take the first specimen that comes to hand. This is so true and so much a matter of everyday experience that the moral needs no pointing, the tale no adorning. George Eliot once said that when we consider the tragic errors made in selecting persons to fill the only relationships open to choice, we are overcome with gratitude to a wise Providence who so ruled it that all the remaining ties should be formed before our birth. Would that this arrangement might have been a little further extended, we sometimes think, to cover responsible positions in business and professional life; for then, had we seen the square peg painfully trying to squeeze himself into the round hole and the round peg ardently striving to expand himself to fit the corners of the square one, we should have resigned ourselves to the inevitable, bowed our heads and said "Kismet!"

All this is by way of preamble; and now, if you are one of those persons whose minds are given to leaps, you have but to exercise your faculty and, considering duly the title of the paper, you need read no further, for the subject is spread out before you. Yet for those who like better to be personally conducted on a tour than to make out the route for themselves, there

is something still to say and a special application to make of the foregoing generalities.

As the kindergarten grows in public favor and repute, as it is lifted into greater prominence, we are enabled to see more clearly the difficulties which attend the proper development of its principles and the drawbacks which hang upon it and impede its progress. There are many of these,—as there must of necessity be whenever a great idea is introduced to the world; but one of the foremost has always been the lack of ideal persons to interpret the doctrine. This is doubtless no more true of the kindergarten than of Christianity, for instance; but has it been equally appreciated? Those of us who have been studying Froebel so long that his views have become second nature feel that the pre-eminent value of the kindergarten, its distinguishing mark of perfection, lies in the outlook it gives upon the world, the clear, rational, and no less spiritual attitude of mind which it engenders. This is true of child, and true of adult; but true of neither, perhaps, if the kindergarten influence be not radiated from the right quarter. Much has been said of the personality of the ideal kindergartner, but have we sufficiently considered that of the ideal training teacher? Yet why is one matter less important than the other? Or if there be a difference, why should not the personality of a teacher of teachers be a still more vital question, because through her students she must eventually act not only upon the children of the present but upon those of the future.

Lack of appreciation of the spiritual side of the kindergarten among those empowered to select training teachers often results in thinking only of the mental attainments of the person under consideration. These may all be there; she may possess every diploma, every certificate of proficiency and experience offered in the kindergarten field; and yet the highest powers of all may be lacking,—those that take their root in personality, deep down below the conscious self. Dr. Stanley Hall wisely says on this point: "We have sought the real ego in the intellect. It is not there, nor yet in the will, which is a far better expression of it than thought. Its nucleus is below the threshold of consciousness. The mistake of ego-theorists is akin to that of those who thought icebergs were best studied from above the surface, and were moved by winds; when, in fact, about nine tenths of their mass is submerged, and they follow the deeper and more constant oceanic currents, often in the teeth of gales, vitiating all the old aerodynamic equations."

It is from this deeper self, from this real personality, that unconscious influence, which is the only real influence, is radiated; and it is this that we must regard, if what is so ethereal and indefinable may be apprehended, when we think of the ideal training teacher. Not that her mental equipment is to be held of less account, but that what lies below and around it is to be considered as something more priceless still.

It has fallen to woman to be the great civilizer and

educator of the race in all times, but her work has been accomplished by force of her spirituality, and it is there that her strongest influence must always lie, however learned, philosophical, and scientific future training may make her.

Goethe's Iphigenia, says Dr. Felix Adler, works a twofold miracle in the play. "She humanizes a barbarian and she absolves a sinner; and how does she accomplish these results? Not by what she does, but by what she is;—by her radiant personality, by the crystalline truthfulness of her nature, by the new faith in the good which she inspires in all who come in contact with her."

Such a radiant personality, such a crystalline truthfulness of nature, is needed by the kindergarten training teacher, whose character must inevitably make deep impression upon the minds of her students; and the more surely so, as they are all engaged in the same work, all thrilling with the same thoughts, all busy upon the same experiments. "It is a characteristic of the estate of youth," says Dr. Hall again, "that it is molded by contact with great characters; and, if it does not find needed heroes and leaders, makes them often of the poorest material, or finds tinsel idols in the cheapest fiction."

Let us remember that revelation is, and always must be, personal in the first instance; and that the depth, the strength, the height, the beauty, and the tenderness of kindergarten principles are unfolded to the pupil in the beginning only through the

instrumentality of the training teacher. We cannot doubt that in many cases the attitude of mind in which the student shall ever after regard her vocation, is absolutely fixed by her first month's work in the training class. The student may not know it; her leader cannot know it,—for the influence which she is exerting comes from that part of herself which the plummet of her consciousness has never reached. Down, deep down, below the surface waters of what she has learned and read and been told and thought she believed, and thinks she is teaching, lies what she is; and it is this which is of supreme and eternal importance.

"We buy ashes for bread;
We buy diluted wine;
Give me of the true,
Whose ample leaves and tendrils, curled
Among the silver hills of heaven,
Draw everlasting dew."

# OUR NURSERY TALES—TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY.

"I would not for any quantity of gold part with the wonderful tales which I have retained from my earliest infancy, or have met with in my progress through life."
—*Martin Luther.*

All the earth is full of tales to him who listens, and there is no there nor here, no then nor now for the fairy and the folk story. They were no more thoroughly at home, no more suited to their environment, when they flowed from the lips of our Aryan ancestors in some far-off region in the misty long ago than they are to-day as they appear in new type on the pages of a new magazine in new America.

In one sense they are as old as time itself, as old as that "childish wonder which is the first step in human wisdom"; in another, we may be tempted to call them modern, for the earliest collections in any of the tongues of the Occident were made one hundred years after Montaigne, whom Lowell calls our first modern writer, and a century and a half later than the latest date commonly assigned as the beginning of modern history. In the true meaning of the word, however, the fairy tale can no more be considered modern than the coming of the dawn or the falling of the dusk, though renewed each day, may be considered modern instances. Like these phenom-

ena of nature, fairy tales have been since time began. for the first naked savage no sooner rose above the stage of mere brute existence, no sooner looked with wonder on the world about him, than he endowed with life the objects of that world, supposing, as he could not but suppose, that their workings were due to an inward volition of which he was conscious in himself. He saw in the great white clouds, cows with swelling udders, driven to the milking by the wind-god; in the sun a yellow-haired divinity, wedding at even-tide the violet light which he had forsaken in the morning; in the moon a horned huntress coursing through the blue sea of air, and in the lightning a fiery serpent whose bite was fatal and whose hissing as he fell savagely upon the earth was the rolling of the thunder.

Robert Browning, in contemplating the childhood of the world, says in "Paracelsus,"

> "——Man, once descried, imprints forever
> His presence on all lifeless things; the winds
> Are henceforth voices, wailing or a shout,
> A querulous mutter or a quick gay laugh,
> Never a senseless gust now man is born.
> The herded pines commune and have deep thoughts * *
> The peerless cup afloat
> Of the lake-lily is an urn, some Nymph
> Swims bearing high above her head."

These myths, as they first became current, were doubtless felt to be neither poetic nor fanciful, but were merely considered to be satisfactory explanations of familiar phenomena, quite as acceptable as our

modern scientific theories on the eclipse of the sun, or the rising and falling of the tides.

One well-devised and wonder-satisfying myth speedily became the parent of countless myth-children and these again, as time flew on, produced in their kind until the world is peopled with their progeny, and history, science, art, literature, and common speech all palpitate with their presence.

We need not here attempt to recite the arguments on that great mooted question, whether the body of these ancient myths, so startlingly alike among all primitive peoples, originated in the same ancestral tongue, or whether similarity of conditions in man and nature may account for the production of some of them at least, in widely distant times and countries.

We have only here to consider their relation to the nursery tales, only here to answer the poet's question

> "——Whence these stories,
> Whence these legends and traditions,
> With the odors of the forest,
> With the dew and damp of meadows?"

It can be proven, undoubtedly, that the classic fairy story, the perfect example of its kind, one which, like that humble plant we call the "live forever," cannot be crushed, or trampled, or weeded, or discouraged out of existence—one which persistently reappears in all times, all countries, all arts, and all literatures—that such a tale is invariably based upon a universal myth and that it is as much a part of our

inherited equipment as a belief in a Supreme Power. These stories descend to us from a time when there was "no supernatural because it had not yet been discovered that there was such a thing as nature," and from days when primitive man felt that close community existed between himself and the brute. The doctrine of metempsychosis, which is found in some shape or other all over the world, implies, as John Fiske says, a fundamental identity between the two, and who can positively deny that in ages long past there might not have been a period when there was such a *rapprochement*, such a similarity of development between man and his brothers "in air and water and the silent wood," that he might not have understood their language as we, by sympathy and daily intercourse, grow to understand the almost inarticulate babblings of the infant amongst us?

No less remarkable than the age of these stories is their universal spread. Whatever their date or origin, they all alike have wings, and as the bird knows his nest, they know their resting place in the heart of all peoples. It gives one a new sense of the brotherhood of man, of the essential oneness of humanity, to find that the very same tale which charms its hearers in the Arabian desert and the coffee houses of Bagdad, is listened to with delight by the Zuñi cliff dwellers, by the fur-clad Esquimaux, and by the American-bred negroes on our Southern plantations.

Not only so, but the philologists prove that the primitive Aryan, "as he took his evening meal of *yava*

and sipped his fermented mead," undoubtedly listened to tales of "Cinderella," "Boots," or the "Master Thief," that were absolutely identical in all their main features* with those your little daughter takes down to-day in their gay covers from her nursery shelves.

The Orient seems in all times to have been one of the richest storehouses of myths, allegories, parables, apologues, folk stories, and tales of terror and wonder. Much of this profusion is due, no doubt, to the mental characteristics of Oriental races, and much to the tropical climate, which renders possible and desirable long hours of serene and contemplative leisure in which the art of the story-teller can be perfected.

The Crusaders unwittingly did literature a great service in bringing home from the Orient many of these magical tales which were spread abroad by preaching friars,—for illustrated sermons seem to have been as much the fashion then, as they are among revivalists to-day; were repeated by travelers and mendicants to secure food and a night's lodging, and were recounted, with others of their kind—sagas, household tales, legends, and fables—by minstrel, gleeman, jester, *jongleur*, and *trouvère*.

In days when there was no literature save what could be communicated orally, when every man was his own novelist, so to speak, as well as his own magazine and newspaper, the profession of story-teller must have been one of great delight and profit. The

*John Fiske: "Myths and Myth Makers."

memory, sole and sufficient resource for those who have never weakened it by reference to printed word, was for many centuries the only library of these artists, for the literary faculty seems to have been used only in embellishing the form of the tales, transposing them from prose to poetry and *vice versa,* and in adding jokes, local hits, or corroborative detail.

In the first years of the twelfth century those few English story-tellers who were also Latin scholars, if there were any such among the humbler folk, might reinforce their stock of magical and supernatural lore from the *Disciplina Clericalis,* which was put together about that time by Peter Alfonsus, a Spanish Jew. It was a wonderful book, partly derived from the Talmud, partly from Arabian fables, and partly from Sanscrit tales, which had been translated into Persian, thence into Arabic, and thence again into Greek.

Romance had taken root at the court of Henry I. at the very beginning of this century, where, under Queen Maud's patronage, that "daring fabulist," Geoffrey of Monmouth, transcribed, rewrote, and adapted old Welsh myths, dreams, and traditions, partly from old Latin manuscripts and partly from Breton legends, calling the glittering whole a History of the Britons.

More than a century after this the *Gesta Romanorum* appeared in England, a curious jumble of classical, Oriental, and Gothic fictions, but a wonderful storehouse for romancers. In its pages Boccaccio found

his Two Friends, Gower and Chaucer the History of Constance, Shakespeare his Merchant of Venice, and in still more modern days Schiller his Fridolin, Parnell his Hermit, and Walpole his Mysterious Mother.

The great body of story-tellers, however, in whatever land they lived, had for hundreds of years no thought of reference to written literature for their material, for the mass of myth-descended tales and romances was at the command of all who having ears could hear and having tongues could speak.

When we begin to consider these stories as the art of printing has fixed them in permanent form, we are amazed at the fidelity with which their inner meaning and spiritual content have been preserved from age to age. Even the clothing of the tale has frequently been retained, the story-teller often using certain old-time words here and there, which had no longer any meaning either to him or to his hearers, but were repeated mechanically as somehow or other,—no one knew how,—an essential part of the narrative.

The oldest known manuscript of the Arabian Nights is comparatively modern, dating from 1548, and it is supposed to have been collected in its present form, only a century earlier, the work being done in Egypt in 1450.

Whatever books the English mariners, Sebastian Cabot and his crew, may have brought with them on their various voyages to this Western Hemisphere, they could not have been fairy or household tales, for those contained in the *Disciplina Clericalis* and the

*Gesta Romanorum* were respectively two and three centuries old, and quite out of the ken of simple mariners, and the modern collections had not yet been made.

America had been discovered nearly a century and a half, the bones of Cabot and Columbus too, all were dust and their good swords rust, and Shakespeare, the great fairy lover, had been dead for twenty years, when modern fairy tales may be said to have had their literary birth in the publication by a gay Italian signor, Il Cavalier Giambattista Basile, Conte di Torrone and Conte Palatino, of a delightful collection called *Il Pentamerone*. It was written in Neapolitan patois, though the various tales are supposed to have been gathered in Crete and in Venice, but they are in essentials exactly what have always been told as nursery tales in all times and all countries, and our old friends, the myth-makers, are answerable for every one of them.

It should be understood of course that the term fairy as here employed is not confined to narratives in which elves or spirits actually appear, but is taken as Chaucer used it, to cover tales in which there is something *faerie*, that is, something enchanted or extraordinary, whether it be fays, giants, dwarfs, speaking animals, or indeed human beings of remarkable wit or stupidity.

Basile obviously had no notion of the philological or mythological value of his collection, or he could never have been so gay and witty, as he tells of The

Months, The Three Enchanted Princes, Peruonto and the Fairy Wishes, Vardillo's Stupidity, Cenerentola, and The Enchanted Doe

"The Dawn," he says at the beginning of one of his tales, "had gone forth to grease the wheels of the Sun's chariot and with the fatigue of stirring the fat into the wheelbox with a stick, had grown as red as a rosy apple." Here is modernism for you, assuredly. And again, as a moral to one of the tales, "He who does not bait the hook of the affections with courtesy never catches the fish of kindness."

The taste of the times in regard to proprieties and improprieties of allusion is sufficiently evident in the *Pentamerone* to render it inadvisable reading for children, but the Cavalier evidently set everything down with a light heart and sang as he wrote.

Sixty years later than Basile, only two centuries ago now, comes dear Charles Perrault, commonly considered the literary parent of the fairy tale. A contemporary of Boileau and Molière and Bossuet, his fame in his own line is as bright as theirs and if, as somebody says, we can judge of a work by the quantity and quality of things which it teaches and inspires, we may easily say that the *Contes de Perrault* have attained the highest mark in their line. He also wrote with perfect unconsciousness it seems, and repeated his narratives as he heard them from grandams and grandsires, old nurses and simple country folk. He says of them himself that "they lack sense and are therefore designed for children that have little sense as yet,"

and he does not dream of their immense age, or their great ethical value. No one doubtless would have been more astonished than Perrault if he had been told that he was dealing with fragments of ancient religions, with sun-myths and cloud-myths and that several of his tales could be found bodily in the *Mahâbhârata* and the *Panchatantra*. It is said of the *Contes* that they are incomparably the most ingenuous and charming of all the collections, which, if true, may be due to the fact that they were all told by the author and his friends to the children of the family around the fireside in the evening, and, being often repeated as dictation exercises next morning, undoubtedly received the benefit of many suggestions from a bevy of competent, if youthful, critics.

A few years after Perrault's collection appeared (1704) came the translation of the Arabian Nights into French, and then Gozzi, the rival of Goldoni (1722), rose upon the romantic horizon with the introduction of those fairy dramas which had such an astounding run for several years in Italy. *L' Angellino Belverde, Il Ré Corvo, Turandot* are completely forgotten now, but they were remarkable and beautiful productions in their time and exercised a marked influence upon succeeding literature.

Dean Swift published Gulliver's Travels thirty years after Perrault's *Contes* appeared, but they are scarcely to be classed as fairy-tales, perhaps, though the touch of the myth-maker is visible upon them,

and are rather humorous extravaganzas based on the impossible stories of travelers in the Middle Ages.

The nineteenth century was about to open when Tieck wrote his Folk Tales and *Phantasus,* partly original these and partly drawn from an inexhaustible source, the memories of a race of child-lovers and child interpreters, who in their simplicity had kept close to Nature's heart. He was closely followed by the Grimm brothers, who, while Great Britain and America were fighting the War of 1812, were collecting their wonderful treasures of fairy lore from the German peasants, many of them from the wife of a cowherd near Cassel. With the advent of these books fairy tales became the subject of scientific thought and study and the earlier collections came to be regarded in their true light.

Perhaps the best teller of fairy stories in the literary sense that the world has ever seen was Hans Christian Andersen, but his volumes contain more of himself and less of myth and tradition than other collections, and the tales are ethereal, symbolic, exquisitely poetic and distinctly touched with the later modern feeling. The ubiquitous myth-maker, who will not be left out of literature, is responsible for some of them, witness the story of the Wild Swans, but in The Ugly Duckling, The Flax, The Little Match Girl and their fellows, the literary artist with a conscious purpose is supreme.

Serious, practical, sober-minded England, who had been colonizing and fighting and trading while her

neighbors were collecting fairy tales, came to the front in 1838 with the first complete translation of the Mabinogion, that great Welsh storehouse of the romantic and the supernatural, but it must not be thought because there had been no notable collections in England, that the people and the authors thereof were ignorant of fairy-lore. English literature is a living witness to the great extent of that knowledge, and Thomas the Rhymer, as early as the thirteenth century, wrote an enchanting description of that Queen of Faery, whose love he was so fortunate as to win.

That purely English fairy tales once existed in tolerable numbers there are evidences in the celebrated library list of Captain Cox, among others, and in odd references in literature and in chap-books, but they were routed by the superior elegance of Perrault's tales when these appeared, and sought refuge in remote country regions.

There are certain indications that the common form of the English fairy tale was the *cante-fable,* a mixture of prose and verse of which the most illustrious example in literature is Aucassin and Nicolete.

Mr. Joseph Jacobs, an authority in folklore, has lately collected two volumes of these early English narratives, and thus viewed, in mass, they are seen to be remarkably vigorous, dramatic, and humorous. The story of Tom Tit Tot is unequaled in its line, Mr. Fox, breathlessly exciting, and The Well of the World's End, a striking and poetic rendering of a familiar theme.

If English children were nurtured on such narratives it is no wonder that the first English translation (from the original) of the Arabian Nights, in 1840, was received with such applause, for the seed fell on ground already well prepared for the sowing.

The Ettrick Shepherd gives us a delightful account of the origin of fairy-folk in Britain.

The Knight of Dunblane, he says, a certain gentleman of honor and repute, met on the hills one day while hunting, a golden-haired damsel, more beautiful than his eyes had ever seen before. He lost no time in making love to her and she responded with equal impetuosity, the outcome of the affair being her consent to be his bride, whereupon, his word given, she spirited him away with her to Fairyland.

For twelve months and a day he remained in the enchanted underground halls, surrounded by every luxury, but hearing no voice and seeing no face but that of his bride, who came to him each evening in fresh attire and fairer than the moon on a clear night.

At the end of the year, when the fay was about to become a mother, she apparently grew exceedingly anxious as to the future of the expected babe, on account of the racial difference between its parents, and so wearied the Knight with her plaints that one day he pettishly exclaimed that he wished he were at home again.

To wish is to have, you know, in Fairyland, and on the instant he was transported to the doors of his castle,

where at first no one knew him and even his dogs refused to come at his call. He was indeed greatly changed, and as days went by grew pale and wistful, took no interest in things of earth and longed unceasingly for his bride. At last one day, a lovely lady appeared leading a beautiful child by either hand and at once the Knight welcomed her as his fairy bride, having no need of the love-tokens she showed to convince him of her identity and gladly acknowledging the twin-children as his own. He was still in transports of joy when a second fair lady and other twins appeared and upon her heels still another dame, until seven resplendent beings attended by fourteen infants were assembled in the room, each one producing irrefutable testimony that she was the rightful wife.

Upon this scene of confusion the Knight's old mother entered and by a few simple spells proved that the brides were the Seven Weird Sisters doomed to remain under enchantment until some gallant cavalier should wed them all.

They one and all disappeared at the sign of the cross made by the old mother, considerately leaving the fourteen children behind them lest their father be lonely, and chanting as they vanished this last injunction:—

"Sweet babes, adieu! and may you never rue
The mingled existence we leave to you.
There is part of virtue and part of blame,
Part of spirit and part of flame,
Part of body and passion fell,
Part of heaven and part of hell.

You are babies of beauty and babies of wonder,
But fly from the cloud of the lightning and thunder,
And keep by the moonbeam or twilight gray,
For you never were made for the light of day.
Long may you amid your offspring dwell,—
Babies of beauty, kiss and farewell!"

The Knight of Dunblane, it is reported, never afterward uttered a word, which is not surprising, considering the shock his system must have received, but moved about for a time like a spirit in pain and then vanished from mortal sight.

It is said that he was eventually made the Patriarch King of the Scottish Fays, but however that may be, his progeny seem to have made themselves entirely at home on British soil, apparently preferring their father to their mother land.

An interesting thing to be noted in connection with fairy beings is that they seem to decrease in size with the progress of civilization. The old myth-makers, weaving their mighty fancies on the mighty forces of the universe, attributed no personality or physical presence to these forces, and it was only as they degenerated into gods and demons and thence into magical beings of various orders, gifted with beneficent and malevolent powers, that they began to appear as flower-folk, as elves, sprites, brownies, trolls, pixies, and other creatures of diminutive size. They appear to be markedly influenced by political changes also, for their scarcity in modern France is accounted for by the story that, terrified by the thunders of the Revolution, they left the country in a body, first assembling in

grateful concourse around the tomb of Perrault, upon whose manes they conferred the boon of immortality. We doubt not that they then followed the example of other illustrious fugitives and took refuge in England, the home of the exile, for no one race of home-bred fairy-folk could have existed under as many names as English speech has for them to-day.

These same Protean and magic creatures appear to be extremely adaptable in religious matters, embracing Christianity and serving as decorous godfathers and godmothers, if occasion requires, or riding broomsticks, weaving horrid spells and dancing at the revels of demon worshipers, if they so elect. On the whole it may be said that they are, as a race, but imperfectly inoculated with religious ideas as yet, and since the possession of a soul seems to be an object of aspiration with some of them at least, it may be that a modern mission to the fairies would be crowned with encouraging success.

Their dispositions seem to be easily affected, which, perhaps, makes the case somewhat more hopeful, in one light at least, for an Irishman of to-day complains that the Scots have had a baleful influence on the ghost and fairy temperament, making it both "dour and dowie."

Leaving the wee folk themselves and returning to their legends again, we find that in all times and countries they deal with the following subjects: Fairy Births, Changelings, Robberies from Fairyland, Supernatural Lapses of Time in that Country, Bird Maidens,

Invisible Caps and Cloaks, Shoes of Swiftness, Magical Captures and Rescues, Inexhaustible Purses, Gold-Producing Animals, Dragons and Monstrous Birds, Sub-Aqueous Fairy Halls, Forbidden Rooms, Magic Words, Impossible Tasks, Cupid and Psyche Legends, Fairy Hinds, Magic Boats, Life Depending on some Extraneous Object, Enchanted Horses, Demons in Bottles, Contracts with the Evil One, Three Wishes, Ring and Fish Legends, Men Swallowed by Monster Fish, Magical Transformations, Thankful Beasts, and Secrets Learned from Birds.

Stories dealing with these last two topics, with beasts gifted with human speech and human intellect, capable even of assuming human form sometimes, and their relations with man are very ancient, as has been shown, and are always classed with fairy tales; though they seem, in some respects, hardly to belong to them. They are called specifically "household tales," though the name labels rather than defines them and they form a separate branch of the great mass of folklore, one in which that view of the animal kingdom shown by Totemism is distinctly traceable.

Still another class of folk-tales common to all times and countries is the "cumulative story," such as "The House that Jack Built," or "The Old Woman and her Crooked Sixpence." This latter narrative is, in fact, an almost literal translation of a mystical hymn in the *"Sepher Haggadah"* of the Talmud, and is an interesting example of the hoary old age of some of our modern nursery favorites.

When we begin to study the subject we are surprised to note how many of our English writers, eminent in other lines of literature, from Chaucer and Spenser, Milton and Shakespeare, down to the present time, have written, collected, and edited plays, poems, and stories devoted to the world of faerie. To give only the most ordinary and well-known examples of yesterday and to-day, there are the Kingsleys, Charles and Henry, with their Water Babies and Boy in Grey; Lewis Carroll with his famous Alice books; Andrew Lang with his Rainbow series; George Macdonald and his Back of the North Wind; Jean Ingelow and Mopsa the Fairy; Hawthorne and his Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales; Drake and his Culprit Fay; Lafcadio Hearn and Stray Leaves from Strange Literatures, and Stevenson and the Bottle Imp, The Isle of Voices, Will O' the Mill, Thrawn Janet, Markheim and several of the fables, which are not fables at all in the strict sense of the word. We may add to the illustrious roll, Dickens, Thackeray, Lowell, Tennyson, Robert Browning, Charles Lamb, George Sand, Charlotte Bronté, Miss Yonge, William Morris, most of whose longer poems are based on faerie subjects, Miss Mulock, Sir Richard Burton, Longfellow, Ruskin, George Meredith, Quiller-Couch, Frank Stockton, W. D. Howells, James Whitcomb Riley, Joel Chandler Harris and Rudyard Kipling.

As soon as we begin to attempt a classification of these productions we see at once the entirely new element which has entered into the fairy tale of to-

day and the complete departure of some of them from the old traditions.

This new element makes no part of the various modern collections, which are merely the old favorites clad in new garments, nor of the classic myths retold, which are so fashionable just now; nor does it show its face in the nursery tales recently gathered in strange countries and among strange peoples, the Zulus, the Zuñis, the Esquimaux, the Persians, Arabians, Chinese and Japanese, and the folk of the Deccan. These are all hoary with antiquity, all bear a family likeness to one another and to our own primitive fireside tales and would be welcomed as at least distant cousins wherever met.

Lewis Carroll's books, on the contrary, represent a distinct new class, a class of freakish adventures, topsy-turvy conditions and general upsidedownness. The chief joy of these stories is the delicious unexpectedness of everything—the pleasure, for instance, of hunting an impossible beast, under impossible circumstances, with impossible weapons through an impossible journey and finding out at the end that he was something else after all and even that something else has escaped us.

This is grotesqueness certainly, and grotesqueness is nothing new in the branch of literature we are discussing, but the marked point of difference is that Lewis Carroll, as a product of modern times, is grotesque on purpose, and here he is a sworn brother of Frank Stockton's, who exploits the grotesque as suc-

cessfully in his fairy tales as in his stories for mature readers.

This is the great distinction, perhaps, that might be made between the fairy stories of the last half century and their predecessors—that they are now commonly written with a conscious purpose to serve as a vehicle for instruction, for satire, be it bitter or playful, for argument, or for furtherance of political views. Such are the fairy tales of the Kingsleys, Macdonald, Dickens, Thackeray, Lamb, and Howells, to give a few conspicuous examples, and such also is an exquisite little book, The Elf Errant, published lately by Moira O'Neill. Then there are the purely sportive narratives, like Anstey's Tinted Venus, and Vice Versa, which toss about the old fairy-tale conventions like shuttle-cocks and laugh as they see them flying through the air, and the eccentric variety, resembling the Beardsley illustrations in their distortion of possibilities. These are decidedly *décadent* in general tone, ephemeral in their make-up and really give no more lasting pleasure to the children for whom they are written, than the clown does when he puts his head between his legs and grins at the audience upside down.

Many of the recent fairy tales, exclusive of this last variety, are witty, tender, graceful, amusing—serious and thoughtful, too, sometimes; but the blight of modernism has fallen upon them: they no longer believe in themselves, and hence their deep indwelling charm has vanished.

There have been also of late years a number of old "motives" in fairy lore worked up into new compositions with modern backgrounds, and these have been humorous and decidedly successful among children, a good example being Chris and the Wonderful Lamp, an Aladdin-up-to-date production, which won much youthful applause in the St. Nicholas lately.

Perhaps Mr. Palmer Cox's "Brownies" may be counted under this head, unless, indeed, from their astounding and phenomenal success they merit a separate compartment by themselves. There was a time when juvenile literature was overrun by a Tartar horde of Brownies, and all other fays, elves, sprites, and hobgoblins hid their heads in caves and lonely forests.

Nor is the invasion over; new Brownie adventures are still being published and witnesses to the mighty power of the race are to be seen in Brownie plays, Brownie cards and note-paper, Brownie caps and dresses, Brownie dolls, Brownie candy, Brownie pins, paperweights, penwipers, and pincushions.

For several years the old hymn was altogether superseded and children refused to sing anything but

> "I want to be a Brownie
> And with the Brownies stand,"

and yet these little beings seem ultra-modern in costume and bearing to the true fairy-lover and condescend, in his opinion, far too much to present conditions in their favorite sports and enterprises.

Among our recent revealers of fairy treasure, of myth and legend, outside of the collectors of nursery tales in all nations, Howard Pyle merits especial mention, perhaps, for the originality of his tales, their graceful composition, their inherent interest, the dexterous way in which ancient and modern have been blended in them, and the old-world atmosphere which wraps them round.

George Meredith's Shaving of Shagpat is said by an English critic, Mr. Alfred Nutt, to be the only one of the modern, consciously invented fairy tales which conforms fully to the folk-tale conventions.

It is not a child's story, of course, but the critic is right in saying that it follows the ancient formulæ as closely and accurately as the best of Grimm's or of Campbell's tales.

"To divine the nature of a convention and to use its capabilities to the utmost is a special mark of genius," says Mr. Nutt, and the observation brings us naturally to Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Stories, the great achievement of recent literature in this line. Overtopping all other books of the kind as the century plant overtops the geranium, they show the mighty power of genius which can deal with subjects eternally old, and with a touch of the finger make them eternally new.

There have been many well-authenticated cases of native children in India, suckled by wolves and spending years in a wild life but little different from that of the savage creatures among which they found refuge.

Not only may such a case be true to fact, though that is of slight importance, but it is true to spirit also; there is a deep meaning in it which the old myth-makers universally felt and utilized and which Emerson voices in his poem on "Power."

> "Cast the bantling on the rocks,
> Suckle him with the she-wolf's teat,
> Wintered with the hawk and fox,
> Power and speed be hands and feet."

"Mowgli" has many predecessors in the realm of myth, legend, and folk-tale, and his attendant animals many brothers in the household stories of all nations, but herein lies one great power of their lives and adventures, that they are built on foundations rock-ribbed like the hills and ancient as the sun.

It is evident enough that Mr. Kipling, as a child in India, was nurtured on these animal tales, and it is probable that with his tremendous receptive power he absorbed the whole literary stock in trade of many a dusky native, but that does not account for the Jungle Stories any more than carbon accounts for the luster of the diamond, or than hydrogen and oxygen in specific quantities account for the sparkle in the fountain. It is the old myth over again. The treasures are ever waiting, but the door of the cave will not open till the hero says the magic word.

The beasts of Mr. Kipling's jungle live as no animals have ever lived before in literature, though his life-giving power and his wide and tender sympathy

with the brute creation were shown us long ago in Her Majesty's Servants, My Lord, The Elephant and The Maltese Cat. Up to Mr. Kipling's time the beasts of fable and folk-tale were but skins stuffed with straw; now they live and move and have their being, for the gods have breathed into their nostrils.

It is in their relations with Mowgli that the wolves, the tiger, the python, the monkeys, stand out most boldly, and this is always so in the household tale,—man and the brute must be contrasted, must be set over against each other that the characters of both may appear more strongly.

Although Mr. Kipling's achievements may be said to be ours because he is of our race and language, yet we have a writer nearer home, a tale-teller of the domestic jungle, of whom we have great reason to be proud. Mr. Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus Stories are as valuable to literature as Mr. Kipling's in that they are of a distinct, new kind, and told with consummate grace and art; and as valuable to the student of folklore because they show the universal elements of the tales of all nations, preserved in this case and brought to this country by the native African. Mr. Harris' animals are wonderfully lifelike and convincing, but though they more abound in humor they are commonly somewhat less serious, purposeful, and dramatic than the beasts of the Indian jungle.

There are exceptions to this statement, however, and one is the Black Stallion's story of his wonderful midnight gallop to save the Yankee schoolmaster from

lynchers, which is full to the brim of dramatic fire and thrills you with every beat of his hoofs and every panting breath he draws.

Both jungle writers are absolutely spontaneous and are evidently so carried along by the vivid interest of their subjects that they believe for the time in every word they say and therefore fill the reader with a similar conviction.

One of Mr. Harris' latest characters "Aaron, the Arab Slave," tells us that he who has been "touched," that is, he who has had the sign of the double cross made on the inner side of his left thumb, knows the language of all animals, and we are sure at once that both Mr. Harris' nurse and Mr. Kipling's performed the mystic rite upon their charges in early infancy.

Another most valuable contribution to American literature is Mr. Charles Lummis' collection of Pueblo folk-tales, entitled The Man Who Married the Moon. There is an Antelope boy in this book who is a near relative of Mowgli on the foster mother's side and a Coyote whose ancestors certainly knew "Brer Rabbit" and "Brer Fox." The stories are full of quiet humor, full, too, of tenderness, insight, and wisdom, and are altogether so superior to some of the nursery tales of other countries that we feel an added interest in the people who have preserved and transmitted them. When we consider the Zuñi Tales and the Uncle Remus Stories we can but feel that the African essayist was partially right at least, who lately wrote in relation to the contribution of his people to our civilization: "Al-

ready we come not empty handed, there is to-day no true American music but the sweet wild melodies of the negro slave; the American fairy tales are Indian and African, we are the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a desert of dollars and smartness."*

It was lately remarked in one of our leading literary periodicals that there are now a large and increasing number of children who find no pleasure in fairy tales, but rather delight in the records of actual occurrences. The statement was not supported by any proofs, however, and was possibly a hasty generalization made by a writer, who, condemned to wearing blue glasses himself, saw the whole world of the same dull hue.

It has always been true that fairy tales failed to appeal to a few exceptional children and doubtless even in the time of the myth-makers, hard-headed and scornful savages existed who said naught but "Pshaw!" when told that the Sun and the Dawn-maiden were lovers and pooh-poohed the theory that the mountains were the mouldering bones of a mighty Jotün, the stars golden missiles useful for stoning the devil.

So sweeping an assertion as that of a general decay of childish interest in fairy tales would require proof by scientific investigation, for in the very nature of things it would appear impossible that it should be true. To one who holds in any degree to the theory

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*W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1897.

of parallelism of development between the child and the race, it seems clear that these tales which were "conceived by primitive men as concrete examples of general truths must naturally be received with joy by children who are in a corresponding stage of development."

It may be that the small persons of to-day, who are somewhat imbued from birth with the scientific spirit, linger a shorter time in the realm of the fairies than did their ancestors, but some term of residence there seems to be fundamentally necessary to development. To shut the child away from myth and fairy tale is, as Lowell says in regard to poetry, "to close up the windows of nature on the emotional and imaginative sides," and from such a course disaster must inevitably come.

The poets have long whimsically protested against the too early inoculation of children with the scientific virus and there are those who contend that the practice involves a distinct element of danger to the growing mind and soul. There is a story of Tennyson and one of his nephews which is doubtless mythical, but is worth quoting as illustrative of the poetic point of view. The conversation on a certain occasion, it seems, turned on education and the spread of scientific knowledge. "Yes," said the Laureate, "it is spreading, and it is crushing all the romance and poetry out of children's lives. It was only yesterday I was walking in the fields with one of my nephews, a little chap of eight or ten, when we came to a fairy ring. 'Look.'

I said; 'look here, my boy, here 's a fairy ring.' 'A what, uncle?' he asked, in a surprised sort of way.

" 'Why, a fairy ring, my lad,' I said. 'The wee good folk must have been dancing here last night, and this is the mark of their feet on the sward.' 'Oh, Uncle Alfred,' he replied quite gravely, 'it is well known that these fairy rings, as you call them, are caused by a species of fungus.' "

Such a little prig as this would be the despair of any right-minded mother, and we can but think him a *lusus naturae,* or one of those exceptions required to prove a rule.

One can but wonder if the parents, and there are such, who entirely disapprove of fairy tales for children, have given the subject careful thought, and realize how the ideal representatives of this branch of literature in their simple humor, their ingenuous views of all things, their poetic subject-matter, their disclosure of constancy, generosity, fidelity and purity in man and beast, their scorn of definite time and place, their youthful way of seeing and feeling, how absolutely suited these are to childhood and how admirably adapted to developing the imagination as well as to introducing the young human creature into universal human conditions. The recounting of actual occurrences, as suggested by the critic already quoted, though most valuable at a later stage of development, cannot serve the purpose of the folk story in early years, and neither can the fairy tales of science, so-called. This term, by the way, is a complete misnomer, for they are

as far removed from the primitive nursery tale as the east is from the west, originating in a different stage of the world's progress, suited to a different age and serving different purposes in the cultivation of mind and soul. One is no more to be substituted for the other than night for day, though both are useful in their turn. We may indeed call them wonder stories and reverence their power of leading the soul from nature up to nature's God, but fairy tales they are not and can never be.

If we tell fairy stories at all then, let us tell "truly" ones, as the children say, and decline to countenance those mummers of modern literature who hold the lesson book under their gay clothing and whack the unsuspecting child with it when safe occasion offers itself. Let us have, too, not only a "truly" fairy tale, but one which remains such to the end, for there is nothing so insulting to the youthful imagination as that clumsy, makeshift narrative which closes by saying, "And then little John, or little Jane, as the case may be, awakened and found it was all a dream."

We need not, of necessity, although warm in our convictions, be such devotees of the fairy tale as to clamor for it for ourselves and for our children first, last and all the time, but we may well claim for it the same place in daily life that we claim for poetry.

The soul needs food as well as the body, indeed it needs more and better food, for one is the germ of life, the other but the husk which envelops it. The imagination must be ministered unto, and it is idle

to suppose that it will content itself altogether with the practical, the instructive, the didactic.

"In a last analysis," wrote Mr. Lowell, " it may be said that it is to the sense of wonder that all literature of the fancy and of the imagination appeals, and if this sense is the survival in us of some savage ancestor of the age of flint, we may well be thankful to him for his longevity, or his transmitted nature, whichever it may be."

The whole Romantic movement in literature, whenever and wherever it has appeared, appeals to this same ancestor and his sense of wonder, and that good red blood of his runs in our veins to-day as hotly as it did in the veins of our fathers, and thrills at the same magic touch.

"Romance is dead, say some; but I say no!"

"God keep my youth and love alive, that I
May wonder at this world until I die;
Let sea and mountain speak to me, that so
Waking or sleeping, I may fight the lie;
Romance is dead, say some; but I say no!"

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